



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt Joins Farmers And Law Enforcement To Condemn Attempted Livestock Thefts

ROBERT G. ORTT April 24, 2023

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Full video of press conference: <https://fb.watch/k3SCl4rdcd/>

Newfane, NY –Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt and Senator George Borrello today joined Niagara County Sheriff Michael Filicetti and a local farmer to condemn recent efforts by a so-called “animal rescue” group to steal livestock from local farmers.

Law enforcement officials were **recently made aware** of a meeting by a group of radical advocates to actively recruit individuals to steal livestock from local farmers. According to reports, the meeting included how to research locations, how to steal the animals, and tips to help them win in court if caught and convicted.

Senator Ortt announced he plans to introduce legislation to amend the law related to burglary in the second degree to include unlawfully entering or remaining on farmland with intent to commit a crime. This would target those who enter farmland to steal livestock and create severe penalties for stealing such livestock.

“Let’s be clear – these are not ‘advocates’, these are extremists who believe they have a right to steal from our hard working local farmers. These extremists are threatening our farmers’ property and their livelihoods. Our farmers have every right to protect their families, their businesses, and their property. These groups are nothing more than criminals, and I stand with our local farmers and urge them to immediately report any suspicious activity. I want to thank our local law enforcement for their quick response and ongoing investigations,” **said Senator Ortt.**

“The extremists who are trespassing on private property and stealing farm animals shouldn’t delude themselves into thinking they are rescuers or ‘heroes’ – they are criminals who should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. They are also sorely misguided if they believe the animals on these farms are being mistreated. Upstate New York farms are about as far from corporate ‘factory farms’ as you can get. Family farms have well cared for animals that would be traumatized if they were taken from their environment and caretakers. People who are truly committed to protecting animals should direct their energies where they are truly needed by volunteering at local shelters,” **said Senator George Borrello.**

“The theft of any animal is a very serious crime. I strongly support legislation to increase penalties for animal theft to protect our farmers. The burden on local and family farms has never been higher, and farmers should not have to fear individuals trespassing on their private property and stealing their animals,” said **Assemblyman Michael J. Norris**.

“Late last week law enforcement was made aware of an animal activist meeting being held in the area. The very next day after the event two trespassing complaints were reported at local farms. I immediately put out a public alert notifying our farmers that they need to be observant for activists trespassing on their property. I also made it clear that criminal activity in the name of rescuing will not be tolerated in this county,” said **Niagara County Sheriff Michael Filicetti**.

Under the proposed bill, such offenses would be punishable by 3.5 to 15 years in prison, followed by 2.5 to 5 years of post-release supervision. Offenders could also be charged with the appropriate level of larceny depending on the value of the livestock stolen.

“Our farmers are already struggling with the after effects of the pandemic and crushing mandates from Albany. These men and women who work on our farms are making an honest living, the last thing they need are radical extremists further threatening their livelihood. I have always been proud to stand by our family farmers, and I continue to stand with them today for their right to protect their persons and their property,” **concluded Senator Ort**.

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