



News from
Senate Co-Leader
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Senator Klein, Assemblyman Dinowitz, Announce New Legislation Aimed at Cracking Down on Black Market for Stolen iPhones

Amid Rising Numbers of iPhone Thefts Citywide, Klein/Dinowitz Bill Takes Aim at Distribution Network for Stolen Smartphones

Bronx, NY – Senate Co-Leader Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester) and Assemblyman Jeff Dinowitz (D-Riverdale), Chair of the Assembly’s Consumer Affairs and Protection Committee, introduced new legislation today aimed at stemming the tide of iPhone thefts across New York City. Over the past several years, iPhone thefts in New York City have soared. Current NYPD statistics show that Apple device thefts are up 10% this year—and with the September release of the new, technologically advanced iPhone 5S, some experts are predicting an even greater increase by year’s end.

The key to stopping these thefts, Klein believes, is by cutting off demand from some of the most frequent purchasers of stolen phones. News reports demonstrate that many stolen iPhones are sold in neighborhood stores, such as laundromats, flea market stands, and bodegas. These stores sell stolen phones off the books after buying the phones from street criminals. Klein’s bill targets these black market retailers by requiring them to prove that they are the rightful owners of the phones they sell. If a retailer is unable to prove that he or she purchased the phone legally, that retailer can face hefty fines or even jail time.

Senator Klein said, “The goal of this legislation is to scare black market retailers out of this terrible business. If you’re a retailer making a few extra bucks by selling stolen phones, you’re now going to think twice before you open up your wallet and pay one of these criminals. I have had someone killed in my district over an iPhone. That is as bad as it gets. But it’s an epidemic across this city and we can’t wait any longer to take meaningful action.”

Assemblyman Dinowitz said, “The theft of smart phones and other wireless communication devices is perhaps one of the most frequent crimes committed in New York. In my district there has been a rash of these thefts in the past couple of years, including a horrific incident where a young man was murdered for his iPhone. We must take swift action to fight this crime by creating every possible disincentive for committing these thefts.”

The legislation will also require retailers to provide detailed receipts for every phone sold. Under the Klein/Dinowitz legislation, these receipts must show the phone’s serial number. By providing that information, law enforcement and consumers will be able to keep better track of how and where stolen phones move in the marketplace.

The lawmakers spoke from the scene of the April 2012 murder and robbery of Hwang Yang. Yang, a Riverdale resident, was killed on his way home by two assailants who wanted to steal Yang’s iPhone.

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