

Senator Pam Helming

Representing the 54th New York Senate District



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Senator Helming Calling on Democrat Lawmakers to Pull Elder Parole Legislation

Standing up for victims' families and accountability in the criminal justice system, Senator Pam Helming is calling on State Democrat lawmakers to rescind Senate bill S.2423, commonly referred to as the Elder Parole bill.

Under the proposed legislation, 55-year-old incarcerated individuals who have served 15 years of their sentences will automatically be entitled to a parole hearing for consideration of release, regardless of the sentence or crime. Incarcerated felons will not have to serve the minimum sentence imposed by the judge and life without parole would effectively be eliminated. If parole is denied, criminals would be entitled to an automatic parole hearing every two years.

Senator Helming was joined by victims' families, including Lynn Mazurkiewicz, wife of Rochester Police Officer Anthony Mazurkiewicz, who was killed in the line of duty on July 21, 2022; Nikki Siplin, mother of 19-year-old Richard Collinge III who was murdered on July 20, 2022; and, Judy Tosh, mother of Kali Ann Poulton, who was abducted and murdered on May 23, 1994 at the age of 4.

The legislation has overwhelming support in the State Senate with 33 Democrat sponsors, enough support that if the bill is brought to the Senate floor for a vote, it would pass. There is a companion bill in the State Assembly (A.2035).

Senator Pam Helming said, "Elder parole is yet another shocking piece of legislation to come out of Albany that prioritizes criminals over victims and their families. The recent conviction of Anthony Mazurkiewicz's killer has shed new light on the ramifications of this bill. To think that convicted murderers would be eligible for parole by virtue of their age and regardless of their sentence defies common sense and abolishes truth in sentencing. It re-victimizes families and further weakens our criminal justice system by throwing accountability out the door. What's further shocking is there are no exceptions in this bill for even the most severe and heinous crimes."

Lynn Mazurkiewicz said, “Most New Yorkers do not know that there is a bill, silently being brought before our elected officials, that would allow murderers, child predators, rapists, and other hardened criminals to be released from prison before their sentences are over. The judge and jury still must matter.”

Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt said, “Elder Parole is the latest in a long line of so-called reforms that prioritize criminals over victims, and ultimately, make our communities less safe. I want to thank Senator Helming for her leadership on this issue, as well as the members of law enforcement and the victims who are speaking out about the outrage of seeing dangerous perpetrators released back on the streets simply for turning a year older. The Senate Republican Conference will always stand with victims over criminals and will work to ensure dangerous and violent criminals are not given a get out of jail free card on their birthday.”

Monroe County Sheriff Todd Baxter said, “I am adamantly opposed to the idea that we, as a society, would allow for the consideration of parole eligibility for convicted criminals, based on their age. We’re talking about individuals who were brought to justice, convicted in court, and handed a sentence to pay their debt to society. Offering them relief of that debt, based upon their age, is unacceptable and only re-victimizes. Where is the compassion for victims? It’s simple; if you commit a crime, do your time. Anything less is illogical.”

Retired Rochester Police Officer and Farmington resident Dennis Cole, Anthony Mazurkiewicz’s longtime partner and close friend added, “The greatest responsibility that elected officials have is to ensure the safety of people. How does releasing convicted murderers back into society due to their age do that? At what point do we begin to care about protecting law-abiding citizens and less about convicted criminals?”

Also in attendance were Monroe County District Attorney Sandra Doorley, Ontario County District Attorney James Ritts, Ontario County Sheriff David Cirencione, Livingston County Undersheriff Matthew Bean, and area police chiefs.

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