



State Senator Velmanette Montgomery

Chair, Children & Families

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For immediate release

GOVERNOR CUOMO SIGNS MONTGOMERY/FRONTUS CENTRAL PARK 5 BILL

The Central Park 5 Bill (S6533 – Montgomery /A7970 - Frontus) was signed into law by the Governor. This important piece of legislation will strengthen recent reforms to our juvenile justice system. This bill will require video recording of all interrogations of youth accused of juvenile delinquency in Family Court. Recent reforms only require recordings in the rare instances where juveniles are accused of violent felonies.

“Even though we passed Raise the Age, there are still so many corners of the juvenile justice system that need to be addressed,” said **State Senator Velmanette Montgomery**. “These coercive situations are not uncommon. Our children should never find themselves in a room alone with law enforcement and no record of the interaction.”

“When the power of law enforcement is focused on minors, we must make sure that they are not coerced or manipulated into confessing to something that is not true,” said **Assemblymember Mathylde Frontus**. “What happened to the Central Park 5, who we now refer to as the Exonerated 5, should never happen to any child, and the way to ensure that is with the transparency that these recordings will provide.”

The bill was named for the Central Park 5, who were all juveniles when they were convicted of sexually assaulting a jogger in 1989. They later became known as the Exonerated 5 when their convictions were overturned following identification of the real attacker. **Each of the Exonerated 5 defendants endured dozens hours of predatory interrogation without an adult present leading to false confessions.** The City of New York has paid out \$45 million in settlements to the Exonerated 5 defendants, whose story was detailed in the series *When They See Us*.

Video recording is universally recognized as a beneficial practice and it is a vital tool of accountability, especially when youth are involved. Recordings of interrogations prevent bad behavior on the front end and provide greater accountability on the back end of the legal process. They reduce coercion, help identify instances of false confessions, provide an objective and reliable record and prevent disputes about officer conduct. This legislation will build upon Raise the Age by providing a transparent interrogation process that protects the rights of young people in the court system.



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