

Senator Pam Helming

Representing the 54th New York Senate District



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Senator Helming on ‘Less is More’ Law in New York State

Senator Pam Helming joined Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt, local law enforcement leaders, and victims’ advocates today in Rochester to speak out against the new “Less is More” law in New York State. Though the law takes effect in March 2022, the Governor recently ordered the release of hundreds of criminals across the state, including violent felons.

Senator Helming said the so-called bail and parole reforms enacted by the Senate Majority hinder law enforcement, empower criminals, and jeopardize public safety. She is a sponsor of legislation (S.7397) that would require the Office of Court Administration and New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services to collect and publish data to show the impact of these policies.

Here is a portion of Senator Helming’s remarks at today’s press conference:

“Less is More. It’s a catchy title. But they’ve got it wrong. The focus should be on more. We have to do more. And we have to do better. I’ve heard the Governor and others say that those on parole ‘have paid their debt to society.’ I disagree. Those on parole are still paying their debt to society. And if they violate their parole, they should go back to jail.

These bail and parole reforms have tied the hands of law enforcement and empowered criminals to defy the law. They do not make the public or our families safer, or hold criminals accountable, or protect crime victims.

In Monroe County, Joseph Rivera, who brutally murdered a woman with a hatchet, was released under the Less is More law. The Monroe County Sherriff’s Office was mandated to release nearly 30 incarcerated individuals charged with crimes ranging from murder to assault to robbery. The majority were violent felonies.

Law enforcement across this state deserves better.

Rochester is an incredible city in so many ways. But a city where violent crime remains a serious problem. We've all seen the recent headlines. Rochester is at its highest homicide rate in nearly a decade. Per capita, Rochester could exceed Chicago, one of America's most violent cities.

New York State is soft on crime and criminals know it. Yet as violent crimes increase and fear intensifies in our neighborhoods, Democrats in Albany continue to cater to criminals. Their actions defy logic.

To me, it's simple. Follow the rules or pay the consequences.

As a state leader, my goal is to see a decrease in our incarcerated population because we have been effective at reducing crime. Not because we're soft on criminals.

If Democrats are truly interested in moving the needle on criminal justice, there is a lot we can do. Stop the closure of local correctional facilities. Back our Correction Officers, parole officers, and law enforcement. Increase funding for Crisis Intervention Team training and other mental health services so we can better help those experiencing a mental health crisis.

As elected officials, it is our duty to enact policies that protect the public. We have to do more. Not less. More."

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