



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

## City of Utica Incident Highlights Need for Video Violence Crackdown

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO August 14, 2009

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### **Senator Griffo & Mayor Roefaro: Utica Incident Shows Need for Video Violence Crackdown**

(Utica) - Senator Joseph A. Griffo (R,I,C-Rome) today called for adoption of legislation he has introduced to crack down on the alarming trend of recording criminal acts of violence with the intent of distributing them on the Internet for entertainment purposes.

Utica Mayor David R. Roefaro joined the Senator in support of the measure.

“The recent case of a Utica video that was put on line makes it clear that some people view violence as entertainment,”Griffo said. “I recognize that in this age of technology, recordings can be a powerful police tool to help investigations. However, when video equipment is misused to transform street violence or staged violence into entertainment, that is crossing the line and should be stopped.

The legislation, first proposed by Griffo in 2008, comes in response to an increasing number of violent attacks orchestrated and recorded by individuals who want to post the videos on internet sharing sites, such as YouTube.com and MySpace.com.

This bill creates the new crime of unlawful violent recording when a person commits an assault while knowingly capturing the crime with a recording device. In addition, a person who persuades others to commit crimes against each other for the purpose of recording, viewing, or broadcasting the crime would be guilty of conspiracy in the fourth degree, a class E felony. Both crimes would allow additional penalties of one and a half to four years in prison.

Utica Mayor David Roefaro said, “This proposed law would send a clear message to individuals who believe fame is derived through videotaping violence- If it’s Hollywood you’re looking for, you may have to write there from jail. I fully support this legislation, and believe it could provide a necessary consequence.”

Utica Police Chief Daniel LaBella said, “This proposed legislation would give us the ability to prosecute people who think they’re free to capitalize on criminal acts. To glorify street violence through video is like taking part in it. A video of a violent incident belongs in the hands of investigators, not up on the internet as a form of entertainment.”

"It's disturbing to see folks trying to achieve fame, attention and celebrity through criminal violent acts," said Griffo. "Especially those that involve children. As technology evolves to improve people's lives or entertain them, we still need to pay attention to lawful behavior. If criminality is caught on a recorded media, then we need to use it as a tool to pursue and

prosecute these offenders."