



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Owen H. Johnson

## Johnson/Senate Pass "Suzanne's Law" To Make Schools Safer

OWEN H. JOHNSON April 6, 2006

State Senator Owen H. Johnson (4th Senate District, Babylon), Chairman of the Finance Committee, announced that legislation he is cosponsoring in the Senate to increase criminal penalties for crimes committed on school grounds passed the Senate this week.

The bill, S. 3226, also known as "Suzanne's Law," was passed on the eighth anniversary of the disappearance of University at Albany student Suzanne Lyall of Saratoga County who the bill is named after.

"Parents, teachers and students deserve to have peace of mind in knowing that our schools are safe," said Senator Johnson. "Those who commit crimes on school grounds should be punished severely."

Senator Johnson explained that "Suzanne's Law" would increase penalties for crimes committed against others on school grounds. The bill would elevate by one level the penalty for the commission of a felony crime on school grounds. For instance, the commission of the Class 'D' felony of Assault in the 2nd degree would now be considered as a Class 'C' felony and would carry a longer prison sentence.

Additionally, the bill expands the current definition of "school grounds" to include nursery schools, daycare facilities, trade schools, junior colleges, community colleges, colleges,

universities and any other institution of higher education.

The bill would also allow, upon the request of any school, for the placing of signs along any highway within school grounds designating the school as an "Assault and Abduction Free School Zone."

"It is time for the Assembly to act on this common sense legislation so that it can be sent to the Governor to be signed into law," Senator Johnson said.