



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian X. Foley

Sen. Foley Calls on Gov. Paterson to Sign Sex Offender E-Mail Notification Bill into Law

BRIAN X. FOLEY August 31, 2009

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Sen. Foley and community advocates urge Governor Paterson to sign bill that would allow residents to receive instant e-mail alerts when a sex offender moves into their neighborhood. Sen. Brian X. Foley (D – Blue Point) was joined by the State Senate’s Deputy Majority Leader Jeff Klein (D – Bronx/Westchester), Sen. Craig Johnson (D – Nassau), and community advocates from the Mastic, Mastic Beach, and Shirley area as they called on Gov. Paterson to sign critical legislation that helps protect children from sex offenders. The legislation (S1362-

C) would create a statewide e-mail notification system, by which concerned residents could receive an alert every time a sex offender moves into their zip code.

Thanks to the statewide emergency communication system, NY Alert, which is managed by the Department of Homeland Security, it will be easy for New Yorkers to register for instant e-mail notifications. Currently, New Yorkers desiring up-to-date information on registered sex offenders in their communities must make daily searches of the Sex Offender Registry maintained by the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS).

There are currently 11,428 level 2-3 sex offenders on New York State's Sex Offender Registry, which classifies offenders according to their risk of repeating: low-risk (Level 1), moderate risk (Level 2) and high-risk (Level 3). Members of the public can access this database at local police stations or via a toll-free telephone number. Level 2 and Level 3 offenders are also listed on an internet subdirectory at the DCJS website.

However, the information changes constantly as new offenders are added or existing registrants update their information. E-mail updates would allow New Yorkers to keep tabs on a specific geographic area, such as where they live or where their children attend school, and would save them the time-consuming chore of making regular visits to the subdirectory website.

“Protecting our children and families is the single most important responsibility we have as elected officials,” said Senator Brian X. Foley. “Whether they’re at home, at a playground, or at school, our children need to be safeguarded from sex offenders. By allowing residents to receive e-mail notifications about sex offenders in their neighborhoods, we can help parents ensure their children’s safety and take the necessary precautions to protect their children. On behalf of families in Suffolk County, I urge Gov. Paterson to sign this bill into law.”

Foley was joined at the press conference by the William Floyd School District Superintendent Dr. Paul Casciano who represents communities that have seen clusters of

sex offenders in their neighborhoods. Dr. Casciano spoke in favor of the legislation.

“This legislation will greatly enhance our ability to notify residents of sex offenders in the community and further assist in keeping our children safe,” said Dr. Casciano. “Given these tough fiscal times, we have already transferred our sex offender notification from paper format to our website and Connect-Ed telephone messages. We thank Senator Foley, Senate Deputy Majority Leader Klein and Senator Johnson for spearheading this legislation and garnering support for it in the Senate and Assembly. The William Floyd School District joins with them in calling upon Governor Paterson to sign this bill into law,” said Dr. Paul Casciano, Superintendent of Schools for the William Floyd School District.

Senators Foley and Johnson also released data for all registered sex offenders living in their districts. There are 251 known sex offenders in the 3rd Senatorial District, represented by Foley.

The top ten communities with the highest number of sex offenders (according to data provided by the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services – DCJS) in the 3rd Senatorial District are as follows:

Towns with highest number of sex offenders in Senate District 3

Brentwood – 70

Central Islip – 46

Mastic Beach – 32

Patchogue – 29

Shirley – 29

Ronkonkoma – 22

Medford – 15

Bellport – 8

Holbrook – 6

Hauppague – 6

East Islip - 5

The legislation has passed in both houses of the legislature with broad bi-partisan support. It passed in the Senate 62-0 and in the Assembly 139-1. All that's left for this bill to become law is Gov. Paterson's signature.

"Getting out accurate information is a crucial step in protecting residents from sex offenders," said Foley. "Especially in light of these high numbers of sex offenders in our communities, I hope Gov. Paterson will sign the sex offender e-mail notification bill into law so parents have up-to-date information about these unsavory characters in their neighborhoods and are able to safeguard their children."

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