



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Martin J. Golden

Senators Volker, Golden, Padavan and Lanza Call for Reversal of Dangerous Division of Parole Directive Tying Hands of Parole Officers, Allowing Parole Violators to Go Free;

MARTIN J. GOLDEN March 3, 2010

Republican State Senators Dale Volker, Marty Golden, Frank Padavan and Andrew Lanza today called on the Paterson administration's State Division of Parole Services to reverse its dangerous new policy allowing convicted drug, sex and other violent offenders out on parole to remain free even if they fail a drug test or commit other illegal actions which violate the terms of their parole.

According to a published report in the February 28, 2010 Albany Times Union, the Division of Criminal Justice Services has also ordered the Division of Parole to drastically limit the number of random drug tests that do occur, in a shortsighted effort to save the State money or give the false impression that crime is down.

The findings come to light following several violent incidents, including the stabbing death of a New York City Transit bus operator by a parolee. The individual's parole officer had sought to revoke his parole after he was caught with a knife, but the request was denied by

higher-ups.

In addition, a parolee was shot by police officers in Albany after attempting to run them over with his car. The individual had recently failed seven drug tests and possessed a loaded pistol.

"Having a parolee violate his conditions of parole two, three, four or more times is simply insulting and places the law-abiding public in harm's way," said Senator Dale M. Volker. "It seems to me that the Division of Parole is limiting the roles of our dedicated parole officers by stopping them from performing their jobs well and keeping these persistent parole violators on the street instead of locking them up so they don't commit another crime. It's clear that we need to get to the bottom of this immediately."

"The Paterson administration has tied the hands of parole officers, preventing them from making sound determinations about whether or not a violent offender should be out on the streets or behind bars. These individuals have been convicted of very serious, and in many cases, violent offenses. It's wrong for the Division of Parole to ignore clear evidence that an individual is likely to commit another offense," Senator Golden said.

Published reports paint a disturbing picture of a parole system severely compromised by an all-out Democrat assault on the tough criminal justice laws enacted when Senate Republicans were in the Majority.

In 2009, the Governor proposed a series of measures to make it easier for inmates to get out on parole by claiming they have a debilitating, but not-life threatening illness.

“Since January of 2009, New Yorkers have been forced to watch in horror as the Democrats eased the State’s drug laws and attempted to make it easier for convicted criminals serving life in prison to win their outright release. This fiasco at the Division of Parole is the latest example of New York Democrats giving convicted criminals a second, a third and even a fourth chance, and putting innocent, law-abiding New Yorkers at greater risk,” Senator Padavan said.

“We should not be making it easier for criminals to continue to plague our neighborhoods,” said Senator Lanza, a former Assistant District Attorney. “If anything, we ought to toughen parole standards in New York so that dangerous criminals remain off our streets.”

In 2008, Republicans passed more than 200 bills aimed at increasing public safety, including new measures to make use of improved technology to fight crime, protecting crime victims and cracking down on those who drive drunk.

Since Democrats took control of the State Senate, they have blocked virtually every common-sense, criminal justice initiative proposed by the Republican Conference.

In fact, Senate Democrats have sponsored a number of controversial criminal justice initiatives, including a measure to encourage inmates to vote (S1707).

The Governor’s Executive Budget sends a clear signal that public safety is not a priority among Democrats in Albany. It seeks to close four prisons, merges important crime-fighting agencies, and reduces the State Police by 269 positions. In addition, the Governor cuts funding for local criminal justice initiatives, including crime fighting and prevention, by ten percent.