



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

## Stronger Laws Needed To Lock Up Sex Offenders

JAMES L. SEWARD April 1, 2010

| ISSUE: **CRIME, VICTIMS, RAPE**



ALBANY, 04/01/10 – At the start of National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, state Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I-Oneonta) today introduced legislation to increase penalties for sex criminals. The legislation comes in the wake of the recent indictment of Jeremy Snyder, a registered level-two sex offender charged with felony rape of an underage girl in Herkimer County.

**“This case is especially troubling, as this adult knowingly preyed on young girls after having been**

**already convicted of a sex offense against a minor,”** Senator Seward said. **“We need to lock up pedophiles like this and protect our children. That is why I am calling for increased penalties for any person convicted of sexual offenses against a minor.”**

In the Herkimer County case, 28-year-old Jeremy Michael Snyder, who calls himself the children’s book character “Harry Potter,” stated that he feels most comfortable with young girls. Snyder was released from prison in 2007 after serving less than three years for sexually abusing a 16-year-old girl. He was most recently indicted in early March on charges of felony first- and second-degree rape and misdemeanor endangering the welfare of a child in crimes against a 13-year-old girl. Under current statute he could be out on the streets again in a few years.

**“Repeat offenders, especially those who prey on our most vulnerable population, cannot be taken lightly as they pose a great risk to our communities,”** Senator Seward said. **“By increasing the penalties for various types of sexual offenses against children, which currently are far too lenient, we are providing law enforcement and judges with the tools needed to put these predators away for an extended period of time.”**

Senator Seward’s legislation (senate bill s.7367) would increase the penalty for rape, criminal sexual act or course of sexual conduct against a child in the second degree from class D to class C felonies and increase the penalty for sexual abuse in the second degree from a class A misdemeanor to a class E felony. The measure would increase prison sentences to reflect the severity of these crimes; in some cases repeat sex offenders could see sentences beyond 15 years.

“Senator Seward has always demonstrated a strong commitment to law enforcement, providing police with the support they need to protect the community. Legislation like this will strengthen our arsenal in the fight against sexual predators,” said Village of Ilion Police Chief Timothy Parisi.

According to Parents For Megan's Law and the Crime Victim's Center, of released sex offenders who committed another sex crime, 40 percent perpetrated the new offense within a year or less from their prison discharges.

"Sexual assault crimes are among the most heinous and those convicted of such acts must be appropriately punished. By increasing penalties as proposed by Senator Seward, prosecutors and judges will possess the proper means of ensuring the safety of our most vulnerable population," said Herkimer County District Attorney John Crandall.

"We applaud Senator Seward for this legislation, which will keep perpetrators of child sexual violence off the streets longer and prevent them from harming others. We have long recognized the importance of accountability for these horrific criminal acts against children and agree with Senator Seward that perpetrators of these crimes be dealt with in a swift, just and fair way," said Wendi Bazan, director, YWCA Sexual Violence Services and Child Advocacy Center of Herkimer County.

Senator Seward has long been committed to protecting children from sexual predators. He has supported numerous measures to update laws and close loopholes to allow detection and prosecution of child predators, including:

*Omnibus Sex Offender Registration Act of 1995*, which established a Sex Offender Registry in New York State;

*Sexual Assault Reform Act of 2000*, which prohibited certain sex offenders from entering school grounds or other facilities where children are cared for and increased sentences for sexual assault against a child contacted by the internet;

*Sex Offender Management & Treatment Act of 2007*, which established comprehensive reforms to manage the most dangerous recidivistic sex offenders and enhance public safety.

Senator Seward also co-sponsored current legislation, which would create the Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention Act, to give law enforcement the tools to catch predators, especially those who deal in child pornography and use the internet, and create a new crime of sexual exploitation of a child.

**“Criminals who violently steal the innocence of our children must be dealt with appropriately. For many victims, the physical injuries and emotional scars of sexual assault will never heal. They deserve to know that those who inflict such wounds will be brought to justice,”** Seward concluded.

-30-

Photo attached: Senator Seward unveils new legislation to increase penalties for sex criminals during a press conference at Ilion Village Hall. Standing from left, Herkimer County Sheriff Christopher Farber, Ilion Police Investigator Paul Rose, Ilion Police Chief Timothy Parisi, Wendi Bazan, director, YWCA Sexual Violence Services and Child Advocacy Center of Herkimer County, Assemblyman Marc Butler, Senator James L. Seward, Ilion Mayor Mark Cushman.