



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

Keeping Sex Offenders Out of Public Housing

JEFFREY D. KLEIN May 10, 2010

| ISSUE: **CRIME, HOUSING, VICTIMS**

Senate Passes Klein Bill to Provide Housing Authorities Monthly Data on Registered Offenders

ALBANY, NY – State Senator and Deputy Majority Leader Jeffrey D. Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester) announced on Monday that the State Senate passed his legislation to help prevent registered sex offenders from moving into public housing. Last week, Klein unveiled the results from his most recent investigation showing nearly one hundred level 2 and 3 registered sex offenders are illegally living in public housing units in New York City.

Klein's bill (S.2490/NYS Assembly same-as A.3024/Benjamin) would require the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) to provide municipal housing authorities with a list each month of all registered sex offenders whose address is within the authority's city or municipality. The bill also requires DCJS to provide registry information for a current or prospective tenant if requested by the public housing authority.

"It is shameful and dangerous that we've allowed sex offenders to move into public housing units across New York State. The time to act is now - we must make it easier for housing authorities to identify offenders from the start, and boot out those currently taking advantage of this vital public program. I urge the Assembly to pass this bill immediately, and the Governor to sign it into law so that New York's children and families in public housing can rest assured that they are safe from this unconscionable harm," said State Senate Deputy Majority Leader Jeffrey D. Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester).

In New York State, lifetime sex offenders are designated with a risk level of two or three. In his investigation, Senator Klein found 74 level two and three sex offenders with New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments listed as their primary residence. By borough, Klein found 15 in both Manhattan and the Bronx, 4 in Staten Island, 5 in Queens, and 35 in Brooklyn.

In 1998, Congress banned subsidized housing for the most serious sex offenders after a convicted sex offender was charged with assaulting and molesting a 9-year-old neighbor girl who lived in the same public housing building. In accordance with federal law, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) established regulations requiring all public housing authorities to conduct a check to determine whether a potential tenant, or member of a tenant's household, is a lifetime registered sex offender.

In 2006, HUD convened a special multi-agency task force comprised of federal and New York law enforcement agencies to combat the problem by going door to door in NYCHA

developments to verify sex offenders' addresses. In February 2007, the task force announced that it had found 78 sex offenders illegally living in public housing, all of whom were evicted or ordered by parole officers to leave the developments. The task force also listed as fugitives 118 convicted sex offenders not living at the public housing addresses they had given to authorities as their current residence.

An original co-sponsor of Megan's Law which created New York's sex offender registry, Senator Klein played a major role in passing New York's long awaited civil confinement law which was signed into law on March 14th, 2007.