



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## 'Brittany's Law' Will Help Keep Families Safe

PATTY RITCHIE May 17, 2011

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### Measure to Create Ex-Con Registry Sparked by Massena Assault

State Senator Patty Ritchie (R,C-Heuvelton) today hailed the expected passage of “Brittany’s Law,” which would create a public registry—akin to New York’s “Megan’s Law” list of sex offenders—that parents and neighbors could check to learn if dangerous ex-cons are living in their community.

The bill, which is expected to pass the Senate this afternoon and is sponsored by Sen. Joe Griffo and co-sponsored by Sen. Ritchie, was sparked by two heinous crimes, including the 2008 Harry Klages case. The bill is named for a 12-year-old, Rochester-area girl, who was murdered along with her mother by a dangerous ex-con, who won an early prison release after an earlier assault.

In the Klages case, the assailant was previously convicted of two separate violent attacks, and was on probation when he stabbed and mutilated a man in his Massena apartment, in a crime that shocked the local community.

“Families deserve to know if a violent ex-convict is living next door, or in their neighborhood, so that they can use this information to take steps to protect their families and children, just as they can now from high-risk sex offenders,” said Senator Ritchie.

“Our police and law enforcement do a great job, but they can’t be everywhere and citizens have a right to information that they can use to stay safe, especially when experts tell us that more than half of ex-convicts will be reimprisoned for committing another crime,” Senator Ritchie said.

The registry can also serve as a helpful tool for police to solve crimes because they will be able to better track ex-convicts, and access information about their past criminal habits.

The bill would require anyone convicted of a violent felony—which are defined by law and range from homicide and kidnapping, gun crimes, robbery, assault and certain stalking offenses—to register upon release and annually with the state Division of Criminal Justice Services. Information about the offenders would be available to the public through online searches and a special “900” telephone number.

While all 50 states have “Megan’s Law” sex offender registries, only a handful have violent felon registries, but the number is growing, from three in 2006 to at least eight today.

The bill, S.3645-C, was sent to the Assembly.