



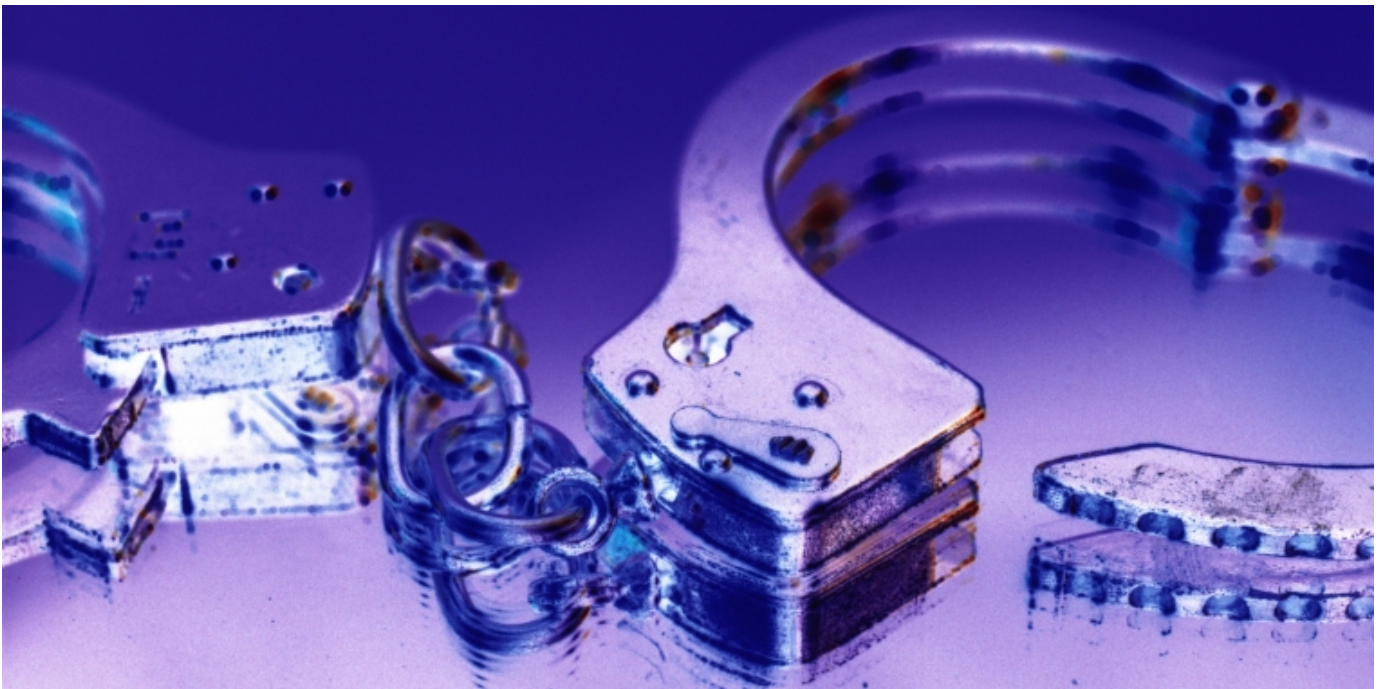
NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo Bill to Protect Police Officers Passes Senate

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO June 1, 2011

| ISSUE: **CRIME**



Griffo Bill To Protect Police Officers Passes Senate

(Albany) - Senator Joseph A. Griffo (R-C-IP, Rome) today announced that after more than two years of successful effort, the New York State Senate passed his bill (S2322) that provides new support for the police officers patrolling the streets of New York's communities.

"At a time when shocking incidents of disrespect and outright confrontation are at an all-

time high, the men and women who patrol the streets of our cities deserve every possible protection we can offer them,” Griffo said. “My bill would make it a crime to take any type of physical action to try to intimidate a police officer. This is a necessary action because we can see from the rise in incidents that too many people in our society have lost the respect they need to have for a police officer. We need to make it very clear that when a police officer is performing his duty, every citizen needs to comply and that refusal to comply carries a penalty.”

Griffo noted that over the weekend in the City of Utica, four people were charged after an incident in which an officer was not promptly obeyed. Griffo pointed out that it follows on the heels of another such event, just a week ago. He noted that his original interest in developing a new law to safeguard police grew from a similar incident in 2008.

“Our system of laws is established to protect the foundations of our society,” Griffo said. “Police officers who risk their lives every day in our cities and on our highways deserve every possible protection, and those who threaten them with disrespect, harass them and create situations that can lead to injuries deserve to pay a price for their actions.”

Under Griffo’s proposal, New York’s penal law would be amended to create the crime of aggravated harassment of a police officer, a Class E felony.

Utica Police Department Deputy Chief Michael Bailey said, “In the world of policing, physical harassment is an everyday occurrence that leaves police officers at best frustrated and at worst injured. This proposed law sends a strong message that physical harassment will no longer be treated as a slap on the wrist but as a felony crime. People never have the right to physically interfere with police officers performing their lawful duties.”

Griffo also noted that this legislation is important to corrections officers. Griffo's proposal is a felony, which means any new conviction/sentence will run consecutively with any current sentence. If it was only a misdemeanor or violation (like current laws of harassment in the 1st and 2nd Degrees), any new conviction/sentence would run concurrently with the current sentence.

"New York's law enforcement personnel put their lives on the line every day. We have a responsibility to support them because the men and women who walk a beat, drive a patrol car or keep our highways safe are everyday heroes who protect innocent people. I hope that this bill will be supported by all lawmakers of both parties and be signed into law so that we can add this layer of support and protection for our police officers."

The bill now goes to the Assembly. "I call upon the Assembly and Governor Cuomo to give this law the support it needs to pass. When it comes to protecting police officers, there are no party lines, only New Yorkers who stand behind those who protect us."