



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Martin J. Golden

Crowley, Brooklyn Da Hynes, Senator Golden Rally WITH Sanitation Workers Calling for Increased Penalties for Assault

MARTIN J. GOLDEN February 1, 2012

Council Member Elizabeth S. Crowley, Chair of the Criminal Justice Committee, introduced a City Council Resolution calling on the state legislature to pass a pending bill, that would make assaulting a New York City sanitation worker assault in the second degree, a Class D felony. State law already provides these protections for many high-risk and valuable jobs including traffic enforcement agents, registered nurses, emergency medical service personnel, firefighters, and police officers.

Council Member Crowley announced the resolution at a press conference on the steps of City Hall on Wednesday, February 1, 2012 with Brooklyn District Attorney Charles Hynes, Uniformed Sanitationmen's President Harry Nespoli, and sanitation workers. Also joining them were Council Member Letitia James, Chair of the Sanitation and Solid Waste Committee, and the sponsors of the bill in Albany: Assembly Members Joe Lentol, Michael DenDekker, Rory Lancman, and State Senator Martin Golden. Council Members Leroy Comrie, Jimmy Van Bramer, Diana Reyna, Ruben Wills, Dan Halloran, Ydannis Rodriguez, James Sanders, and Darlene Mealy also came to show support for the legislation.

"It's time we give New York's Strongest the same legal protections as the Bravest, Boldest and Finest. This legislation would strengthen the message that sanitation workers are a valued part of our City and that assaulting a member of the department will result in severe consequences," said Council Member Elizabeth Crowley. "Sanitation workers are on the streets every day and are vulnerable to physical and verbal altercations from impatient drivers. I want to thank the sponsors of the bill in Albany, Assembly Members Joe Lentol, Michael DenDekker, Rory Lancman, and State Senator Martin Golden for advocating for this important piece of legislation."

"As District Attorney of Kings County, I have zero tolerance for violent attacks against the City's uniformed civil service workers while they are trying to do their jobs," said District Attorney Charles J. Hynes. "The hard working sanitation workers that work hard to keep our City clean need to know that we are behind them and that we will not tolerate any violence against them. The New York City Council is expressing this solution by introducing Councilwoman Crowley's resolution. It's time for the State Legislature to pass this bill and send a message that assaulting a sanitation worker will result in the most serious penalties."

There has been an increase in the number of sanitation workers assaulted while performing their duties. In one incident, a motorist attacked sanitation worker Juan Ramos with a shovel because the motorist could not pass the sanitation truck. Mr. Ramos suffered extensive injuries including multiple broken ribs. Another incident involved sanitation worker Vincent DeBlasio who was assaulted in Brooklyn following a verbal fight between a man and Mr. DeBlasio's partner.

"I want to thank District Attorney Hynes and the Council Members for their support," said union president Harry Nespoli. "Sanitation workers are tired of being assaulted while on the job, and this law is long past due. Giving my members the same protection as other uniformed personnel raises the bar for anyone who wants to assault a sanitation worker. It will make people think twice before getting abusive."

"I commend Council Member Crowley for her support of legislation I have sponsored to protect New York's Strongest," said Senator Martin Golden, the Chairman of the Senate Civil Service and Pensions Committee and the sponsor of Senate Bill 3809. "This is the year that we must stand up against physical violence against the men and women who are the more than 6,000 members of the New York City Our Sanitation workers who serve our City so well, and their families, deserve this safety to guard them as they do their work."

"For New Yorkers, maintaining a clean city and environment is of the highest priority. We expect our Sanitation workers to do the hard work of enforcing the laws we pass—even against individuals who can become abusive and violent," said Assemblyman Joseph Lentol. "These workers need the protection of the law for themselves as well. We need to send a clear message to anyone who believes they can assault Sanitation workers and get away with it. Under my bill, they will be prosecuted and charged with a felony—their conduct won't be tolerated. I thank Council Member Crowley and my colleagues for supporting this measure."

“The roadside work performed by sanitation workers is dangerous enough without the threats of violence and harassment they endure from the public,” said Assemblyman Rory Lancman, chairman of the Assembly Subcommittee on Workplace Safety. “All employees, especially those who help keep our wonderful city clean, deserve a safe and secure workplace.”

“As a former sanitation worker and supervisor of the New York City Department of Sanitation, I know firsthand how dangerous the job can be,” said Assemblyman DenDekker. “Many annoyed motorists have threatened or assaulted workers in the past for simple performing their duties such as household collection or snow removal operations. For too long the professional performance of our DSNY workers and supervisors has been negatively impacted by the threat of assault by residents. This legislation will better protect our Sanitation workforce and should act as a deterrent to those who do not appreciate the backbreaking daily work they perform in all kinds of weather to keep our City clean and healthier.”