



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Dean G. Skelos

## Senate Passes Bill to Protect Teens From Sexual Predators at Schools

DEAN G. SKELOS May 14, 2012

The New York State Senate today passed legislation that would make it a crime for school employees to engage in sexual activity with students, including those who are older than New York's legal age of consent. The bill [S.6714](#)), sponsored by Senator Betty Little (R-C-I, Queensbury), addresses inappropriate student-school employee relationships by criminalizing sexual conduct between school employees and full-time students of elementary and secondary schools.

"We have laws prohibiting sexual relationships between doctors and patients and harassment laws to ensure that workers are not subject to sexual advances from their bosses," said Senator Betty Little. "Although a student may be old enough to consent to sex with a school employee, it doesn't make it right. Students ought to have the same level of protection of other categories of people to ensure they aren't manipulated by those in positions of power and trust."

"For the mental and physical well-being of our children, teachers and others in positions of power at our schools should not be allowed to abuse the trust placed in them by having sexual relationships with students," Senate Majority Leader Dean G. Skelos said. "This bill is especially helpful in protecting teens, regardless of their age, by making it illegal for those working in our schools to use their position as a way to manipulate students into engaging in sexual activities."

New York's legal age of consent is 17. By taking a child's school status into consideration, this bill would remove an elementary or secondary school student's ability to consent and prohibit sexual conduct between a school employee and a student. Violations would be a class E felony and carry a sentence of up to 4 years in prison.

This bill also addresses any possible adult that is in a position of trust in a school by defining school employees as anyone receiving compensation from a school district where services performed involved district student contact, as well as any person, other than an employee, who provides services to a school or school district which involve direct student contact.

Twenty other states have recognized the seriousness of the issue and criminalize this conduct under their current statutes.

The bill will be sent to the Assembly, where it is being sponsored by Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther.