



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kenneth P. LaValle

LaValle Bill Passes Senate, Prevents College Hazing

KENNETH P. LAVALLE May 16, 2012

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The New York State Senate today passed legislation to prevent the tragic injuries and deaths that can occur due to hazing at colleges and universities. The bill (S.1937), sponsored by Senator Kenneth LaValle (R-C-I, Port Jefferson), would help cut down on hazing by strengthening a college or university's enforcement authority and increasing awareness of the consequences of hazing, underage drinking, and illegal drug use.

“Hazing can create physical as well as emotional scars that may last a lifetime,” Senator LaValle said. “There is nothing ‘good-natured’ about hazing and it cannot be tolerated on our college and university campuses.”

In spite of good faith efforts on the part of institutions of higher education to implement policies and procedures to combat hazing, problems continue and show no signs of decreasing. As a result, parents, administrators and trustees have become increasingly concerned about the safety of their children and students on campus.

Last month, SUNY Binghamton halted all pledging activity on campus due to an alarming number of serious hazing complaints, and in November, a member of the Florida A&M marching band was beaten to death as part of a hazing ritual.

This legislation passed today would build upon existing criminal laws against hazing, underage drinking and illegal drug use to deter such activities by requiring colleges and universities to implement more serious consequences and disciplinary charges for offenders. The bill:

- Requires colleges to adopt rules prohibiting hazing, underage drinking and illegal drug use and establish penalties for non-compliance;

- Expands authority of colleges to regulate conduct by college and student government organizations and clubs, athletic teams and clubs, alumni organizations, fraternities, sororities, and any other organization that has access to and use of the college facilities;
- Requires colleges to educate the campus community on bias-related crime, hazing, underage drinking and illegal drug use; and
- Requires colleges to inform incoming students of and to train residence hall staff in the prohibitions against hazing, underage drinking and illegal drug use.

The bill will be sent to the Assembly.