



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo: Senate Passes Bill to Keep Violent Repeat Offenders in Prison

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Measure Prompted by Murder of Utica Woman by Career Rapist on Parole

The New York State Senate today passed legislation to require certain violent felons to serve their maximum prison term if there is evidence that their release would pose an imminent threat to society. The bill (S.6020A), sponsored by Senator Joseph Griffo (R,C,I - Rome), would help protect the public by keeping repeat offenders off the streets and limit “good behavior” and other rewards from reducing the time spent in prison.

Last November in Utica, 68-year-old Linda Turner was sexually assaulted and murdered by a paroled career rapist named Robert Blainey. He had been released early from prison due to merit time earned for good behavior while incarcerated, despite saying to the state Board of Parole, “Society is safer with me in prison,” among other foretelling statements.

“The rapist and murderer, Robert Blainey, made his evil mark in Central New York for which he will always be remembered,” said Senator Griffo. “But even before Blainey, it was clear that the system was flawed and had the potential for tragedy. I vowed that I would do everything in my power to advocate and pass the measures necessary to protect people of Oneida County and not let New York families, already victimized once by predators, to be

victimized a second time by that system. Today in the Senate, we moved to show that no community anywhere in this state should have to endure the kind of fear that gripped Oneida County because of gaping holes in existing policies.”

“Unrepentant violent offenders who continue to be an imminent threat to public safety should not be allowed on our streets even one day longer than their full prison sentence allows,” Senator Skelos said. “We need to give the state Parole Board the ability to consider all the evidence when making decisions about a predator’s potential release so that the welfare of our citizens can be protected as long as possible.”

Under current state law, Blainey was only required to serve two-thirds of his 1989 sentence of 12 ½ to 25 years with the merit time he had accumulated for good behavior while incarcerated. Even if the state Parole Board believed he was still a danger to society, they had no choice but to release him early so long as Blainey signed the conditional release terms.

The bill passed today gives the state Board of Parole the authority to require certain violent felons to serve out their full prison sentences when the parole board finds convincing evidence that the release of the inmate would pose an imminent threat to society. The legislation also makes the earning of good behavior allowances for violent felony offenders contingent upon their not being an imminent threat to society upon release.

The bill will be sent to the Assembly.