



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Statement by Senator Patty Ritchie

PATTY RITCHIE January 14, 2013

| ISSUE: **CRIME, GUN CONTROL**

The horrific incidents in Newtown, CT, and Webster, NY, prompted shock and outrage across America. As a mother, and a grandmother, I experienced the same emotions and horror at these events, and other recent random acts of gun violence, as citizens all across this great state and nation.

It has been clear to me that the only truly effective way to stem future such acts of random violence is with penalties that fit the crime, as well as improvements to our mental health safety net, to keep firearms out of the hands of convicted felons, career criminals, the mentally ill, and those who may wish to do harm.

I support the provisions of this plan that strengthen our laws against criminal use of firearms, and especially, the inclusion of my “Mark’s Law” proposal that provides the maximum penalty under law—life imprisonment without possibility of parole—for the murder of First Responders and the courageous volunteers. I was proud to create and sponsor this legislation, to honor Mark Davis, an EMT from my own district who was murdered while performing his duty, and the millions of brave men and women who selflessly put their lives on the line to serve and save others.

I also wholeheartedly support the expansion of “Kendra’s Law” to help ensure adequate medical care and services for the mentally ill, and hope that the resolve forged by these horrific crimes will lead to continued efforts to improve and strengthen our system of mental health care even beyond the provisions of this legislation.

At the same time, it is also clear to me that attempts to restrict legal ownership and possession of firearms from responsible sportsmen—rather than focusing on criminals—will not enhance the safety of our communities, and deprives law-abiding citizens of an important right under the Constitution of the United States.

It is for that reason, and based on the many hundreds of sportsmen and constituents I represent, who contacted my office to urge me to oppose this legislation, that I chose to vote no on this legislation.