



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

## Senator Kennedy Calls on SUNY to Ensure Operable Carbon Monoxide Detectors in Every Dorm Room

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY February 19, 2013

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*After UB students sickened and dorm evacuated, Kennedy wants SUNY to ensure CO detectors are present and functional during more frequent inspections.*

*Kennedy: A Stronger SUNY Policy on CO Detectors Will Help Students and Parents Breathe a Little Easier.*

BUFFALO, N.Y. – Following a **carbon monoxide leak** that sickened several University at Buffalo students and led to the evacuation of a campus dormitory building, Senator Tim Kennedy, D-Buffalo, is urging State University of New York (SUNY) officials to ensure carbon monoxide detectors are present and functional in dorm rooms across the state. Kennedy also wants SUNY officials to inspect CO detectors more frequently to prevent the tragic effects that this “silent killer” can have.

“Each year, carbon monoxide poisoning leads to approximately **500 deaths and 15,000 emergency room visits** nationwide. Tragedy was averted at UB because campus officials responded quickly to the CO buildup, but we cannot let something like this happen again,” said Senator Kennedy. “I urge SUNY officials to do everything they can to protect students’ health and safety. SUNY must ensure there is an operable carbon monoxide detector in every dorm room, and the detectors should be inspected more frequently to ensure they’re in

good condition and always working properly. Operable CO detectors are the only way to stop this silent killer.”

Carbon monoxide is a leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths. In 2010, Amanda’s Law – which ensures CO detectors are present and operable in homes across the state – went into effect to prevent carbon monoxide poisonings. Kennedy believes more-frequently-inspected CO detectors in every dorm room will more closely reflect the safety recommendations of first-responders and fire prevention groups like the [National Fire Protection Association](#) (NFPA).

SUNY lists the typical yearly expense for [room and board at \\$11,060](#) for 2012-13.

“For the room fees they pay, students and their families should be able to expect that their safety is protected and diligent efforts will be made to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning,” Kennedy said. “A stronger SUNY policy on CO detectors will help students and parents breathe a little easier.”

Kennedy wants officials who oversee campus dormitories at each SUNY college or university to ensure a CO detector is present and functional during regularly scheduled dorm room inspections. Kennedy is also urging SUNY to instruct residence hall staff to test CO detectors monthly, as recommended by NFPA.

[Senator Kennedy wrote to SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher today](#) to encourage her to re-examine SUNY’s policies on carbon monoxide detectors and ensure student safety.

Carbon monoxide is colorless, odorless, tasteless and nonirritating. That’s why it has widely become known as the “silent killer” If initial symptoms of CO poisoning are ignored, individuals could lose consciousness, making danger inescapable.

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*Senator Timothy M. Kennedy represents the New York State Senate's 63rd District, which is comprised of the towns of Cheektowaga, the city of Lackawanna and nearly all of the city of Buffalo. More information is available at <http://kennedy.nysenate.gov>.*