NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

No Parole For Dart - Keep Convicted Killer Locked Up

JAMES L. SEWARD November 22, 2013

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ONEONTA, 11/22/13 – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I-Oneonta) today urged the new York State Parole Board to deny the release of David Dart, who murdered 18 year old Gillian "Jill" Gibbons in 1989 in Oneonta.

"This horrendous crime remains fresh in the minds of the victim's family, her friends, and the community at large," said Senator Seward. **"I see no reason why this confessed killer should be afforded the opportunity to roam free after taking a young woman's life in cold blood."**

In a letter to the superintendent where Dart is housed, Senator Seward said, "*In the interest of the safety of the victim's family and well-being of my constituents, I object in the strongest possible terms to the release of Mr. Dart.*"

Dart was convicted of second degree murder and is serving a 25 years to life sentence. Dart had also been arrested multiple times prior to the murder of Jill, and made a threatening remark to the victim's sister following his conviction.

"I am also concerned about the apparent lack of proper notification of the victim's family in regard to a parole hearing. Victim impact statements serve a vital role, and the system needs to be reliable. It is the least that can be done out of respect for a family that has already been through more trauma and suffering than anyone ever should," added Seward.

Seward says a pair of bills he has helped pass in the senate would make real improvements to the system. Neither bill has been brought before the assembly for consideration.

Senate bill 2486 would allow the parole board to extend the period of time between reconsidering denials from two years to five years. In many cases, especially murder and other violent offenses, parole is denied multiple times and extending the timeframe for reconsideration would give the parole board greater discretion in setting hearing dates.

Senate bill 5542 would require that notice be given to the district attorney and crime victims 30 days before parole hearings and release of inmates. The legislation includes a stipulation that notification must be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, to make sure the notification is received.

"When a victim and her family endure an act of violence, a great deal of healing must take place, both physically and mentally. Every effort to provide additional peace of mind must be made," Seward concluded.

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