



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

## In Wake of Bronx Explosion, Senator Klein, Assemblyman Benedetto Vow to Increase Penalties for Fireworks Vandals Who Damage Property

JEFFREY D. KLEIN December 31, 2013

| ISSUE: **CRIME, COURTS, CRIMINAL, ARSON**

**Country Club, Bronx, N.Y.** – In the wake of a major fireworks explosion Monday night in the Bronx, State Senate Co-Leader Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester) announced he will introduce legislation that would dramatically increase penalties for vandals who set-off fireworks explosions causing more than \$1,000 in property damage or public panic. Assemblyman Michael Benedetto (D-Bronx) will sponsor the legislation in the Assembly.

“New Year’s Eve should be a time for public celebration, not panic and fear. Last night’s explosion was terrifying and has no place in any community,” **Senator Klein said**. “If these types of vandals think they can get away with a slap on the wrist, they’re dead wrong. I will not risk letting our young people think that this type of life-threatening vandalism is ok here or anywhere else in New York.”

**Assemblyman Benedetto said:** “It is important that we send a message to all who think something like this is a ‘fun prank’. It is anything but. Terrifying our residents in the middle of the night is anything but fun and they should be held responsible.” Currently, an individual who illegally explodes fireworks faces a maximum of 15 days in jail. But under Sen. Klein’s proposed legislation, an individual who illegally explodes fireworks and causes \$1,000 or more in property damage or public panic would face a sentence of between 1- 4 years in prison. **The legislation would elevate the offense from a violation to a Class E felony.**

**Community Board 10 Chairman John Marano said:** “It is scary knowing that the perpetrator of this explosion can just walk the streets and get away with harming others. I applaud Senator Klein for recognizing the need to hold those that cause public panic like this accountable. The common person should never have to live in fear.”

**Al Carena, President of Spencer Estates Civic Association said:** “In this current climate we live in, incidences like this can cause public alarm and should be addressed. The New York State Legislature should take a look and consider this bill.”

**Frank W. Diefenbach, Affected Homeowner on Middletown Road said:** “The perpetrator of this explosion showed no regard for our property or for the safety of local residents and animals in the area who could have been hurt or injured. I think this

legislation its a wonderful idea and its something that needs to be done to protect homeowners like me."

Monday night's incident, which occurred inside Pelham Bay Park at approximately 11:00 PM, is currently under investigation by the Arson and Explosion Squad and by the 45 Precinct Detective Squad. Damage to at least three homes has been reported as a result of the explosion.