



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patrick M. Gallivan

## As Instances of School Violence Continue, Gallivan Calls for More School Resource Officers

PATRICK M. GALLIVAN January 16, 2014

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### *Senator Cites Recent Incidents in Colorado and New Mexico As Evidence Of SROs' Effectiveness*

ERIE COUNTY - State Senator Patrick M. Gallivan (R-C-I, Elma) announced today that he is proposing a new school voucher program to provide funds to school districts to be used exclusively for the hiring of School Resource Officers (SRO).

“Throughout my entire professional life – with the State Police, as Erie County Sheriff and now in the Senate – I have been a strong proponent of school resource officers and the tremendously positive impact they can have on students, schools and communities,” Gallivan said. “SROs are so much more than a cop on the beat; they are mentors, counselors, confidants, and above all, they provide a professional security presence for our most precious assets – our children.”

Gallivan’s proposal is modeled after a joint-SRO pilot-program he implemented this past year in cooperation with the Erie County Sheriff’s Office and five Erie County-based school districts; Alden, Holland, Iroquois, North Collins and Springville-Griffith. This program, funded through a legislative initiative grant secured by Gallivan, employs one Erie County Sheriff’s Deputy who serves all five districts as an SRO on a randomized rotating daily basis.

In a January 3rd letter addressed to Governor Cuomo, Gallivan argues for a similar, state-wide program to be funded and implemented through the upcoming state budget process. Specifically, Gallivan calls for a \$30,000 voucher for each school district in the state, which could only be utilized by combining it with at least two other vouchers to employ a county sheriff deputy as a shared-SRO between partnering districts. The cost of employing an SRO ranges between \$80,000 and \$100,000 annually.

In a recent school shooting at Arapahoe High School near Denver, Colorado that killed two, including the shooter, a School Resource Officer was credited with taking action that proved to be a “critical element to the shooter’s decision” to commit suicide, thus preventing further innocent bloodshed. Similarly, this week in Roswell, New Mexico, a teacher at Berrendo Middle School who had recently completed “active shooter” training was able to convince a 12-year-old shooter to relinquish his weapon after wounding two fellow classmates.

“In both Arapahoe, Colorado and Roswell, New Mexico, lives were saved and further tragedy averted because of the presence and intervention of trained and prepared professionals. Of course we would all love to live in a world where things of this nature didn’t occur, but that’s not reality,” continued Gallivan. “I believe that protecting students and providing a safe environment for their education is a central responsibility of state government, and a lifetime of experience tells me that the best way to ensure our kids are safe is through the presence of trained public safety professionals like SROs.”

In response to the 1999 shooting at Columbine High School in Colorado, The New York State Police implemented a “School and Community Outreach Unit.” The program was twice expanded through federal funding grants provided by the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS). However, due to state and federal budgetary restraints, the State Police’s “School and Community Outreach Unit” was eliminated in 2010. Some wealthier school districts were able to fund SROs themselves, but

many schools across New York State remain without a trained security and safety professional in their hallways.

Gallivan's proposal would allow every school district in New York to have access to the valuable services of an SRO program without diverting large amounts of State resources.

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*Senator Patrick M. Gallivan represents parts of Erie, Monroe and Livingston Counties, and all of Wyoming County in the New York State Senate. Prior to taking office in 2010, Senator Gallivan served for 15 years with the New York State Police and as Sheriff of Erie County from 1997-2005.*