



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Governor Signs Griffo Bill to Increase Clothes Donations to Charity

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO December 23, 2014

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MARCY – Sen. Joseph A. Griffo today thanked Governor Andrew Cuomo for signing his bill, which will allow counterfeit clothing items to be distributed to people in need instead of destroyed. He was joined at a news conference by Major Francis Coots, commanding officer of New York State Police Troop D; Vincent P. Scalise, executive director of the CNY Veteran's Outreach Center; and Matt Miller, executive director of the Rome Rescue Mission.

“While I support laws that punish those who steal intellectual property, it bothers me terribly that our only solution, to this point, was to destroy the counterfeit items,” said Griffo, R-Rome. “There are individuals in my district – and across the state – who are desperate for new clothing. We can ensure that trademarks are upheld, while giving someone a warm coat or a new pair of boots at the same time.”

The Griffo bill ([S2020A](#)), which takes effect immediately, gives a judge the option to order that the imitation clothes be donated to a non-profit organization with an established history of service to the poor. The court would give the merchandise company who had its items counterfeited 30 days to oppose the donation. After 30 days, the court would distribute the clothes. The clothes could not be resold and any counterfeit marks or tags would be removed.

“Our troop is part of this community. In our service, we often encounter people in great need,” said Major Coots. “We understand how valuable new clothing can be when times are tough. We’re pleased that Senator Griffo and Governor Cuomo have given the courts an avenue to make use of the clothing we’ve previously had to destroy.”

Miller added, “In helping ‘the least, the last and the lost,’ we encounter many who are in desperate need of new clothing. They would not care if a counterfeit logo were removed if the item kept them warm or dry. I thank Senator Griffo for recognizing that it just doesn’t make sense to destroy perfectly good clothes when there is such a need in our community. It’s my hope that the courts exercise the option to send these items to organizations like ours as often as possible.”

Added Scalise: “Our organization provides many services to veterans and their families, including keeping a donation room stocked with clothing, furniture and other household items. Our staff and volunteers spend great time and resources trying to provide for the individuals they serve. Like many other charitable groups, we’d be pleased to accept this

seized clothing and then dedicating our limited budget to providing other resources and filling other needs.”