



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Dean G. Skelos

State Senate to Hold Joint Committee Hearings in January About Police Safety and Public Protection

DEAN G. SKELOS December 29, 2014

Hearings Will Focus on Serious Safety Concerns Raised By the Shooting Deaths of Two New York City Police Officers

The New York State Senate will hold a series of public hearings convened by four Senate committees starting in early January to examine police safety and public protection in New York City and throughout the state. The hearings will review serious safety concerns raised by the shooting deaths of two NYPD Officers, Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu, in addition to other recent attacks and hostility directed at law enforcement.

Senate Co-Leader Dean G. Skelos said, "Police officers have an extraordinarily difficult and dangerous job to do and it's incumbent upon both the City and the State to give these individuals the support they need and ensure they are always treated like the first-class professionals we know them to be. By convening these important hearings, the State Senate is sending a clear and convincing signal that police officers should have every tool they need to promote public safety and protect and defend themselves."

The hearings will be held in New York City and Albany and provide a thorough and balanced review of the City's and State's criminal justice systems. The Senators will receive input from law enforcement, legal scholars, City and State officials, and district attorneys on issues that

include:

- The safety of police officers, in New York City and the rest of the state, in the current climate;
- Statistics on assaults upon police officers and discussions about adequate training and equipment and the risks the police must take while in the line of duty;
- The impact of community policing;
- The need for state action to assure adequate police disability and death benefits, impose stricter penalties and deny bail for people who assault police officers and/or make threats to the police, and provide increased treatment for criminals with mental illnesses, among other measures; and
- The grand jury process and procedure.

The following Senate Standing Committees, which will have subpoena powers, will jointly hold the hearings: Codes, chaired by Senator Michael Nozzolio (R-C, Fayette); Crime Victims, Crime and Corrections, chaired by Senator Pat Gallivan (R-C-I, Elma); Investigations and Government Operations, chaired by Senator Carl L. Marcellino (R, Syosset); and Civil Service and Pensions, chaired by Senator Martin Golden (R-C-I, Brooklyn). Dates and locations are being confirmed and will be announced once finalized.

Senator Nozzolio said, "As Chairman of the New York State Senate Codes Committee, and former Chairman of the Crime Victims, Crime and Corrections Committee, I applaud Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos' efforts, and the work of our Senate Republican Conference to strengthen New York's criminal justice laws. We will not tolerate the senseless acts of

violence against our citizens, nor the profoundly violent acts of cowardice targeted against our police officers and first responders as they put their lives on the line every day to protect us. Ensuring the safety of our police officers and first responders has never been more important. Whether in New York City, in Rochester, or along the shores of Lake Ontario in Webster, these cold-blooded assassinations against our heroic first responders are attacks against all of us, and must not be tolerated or forgotten. As we begin this review to strengthen New York's criminal justice laws to protect our citizens and police officers, we also must place more focused attention on preventing criminal behavior by the mentally ill in our state. Additionally, we need to do all possible to protect the public from violent felons who show no remorse for their crimes and exhibit a dangerous propensity for violence."

Senator Gallivan said, "As a former New York State Trooper and Sheriff of Erie County, I believe the first step in making sure our communities are safe is to ensure the safety of those who have taken an oath to serve and protect their fellow citizens. I also believe it is in everyone's best interest to make sure our law enforcement officers across the state are the best trained and best equipped. As legislators, it is our responsibility to review procedures and policies, fully examine them, and thoroughly debate them. I look forward to hearing from the law enforcement community, legal scholars and others to help determine if reforms to our criminal justice system are warranted, while at the same time ensuring both police and public safety."

Senator Marcellino said, "Our communities are safer because of the sacrifices police officers and first responders make every day. It is a tough job and we must do all that we can to see that their jobs aren't made even more difficult. It is time that we use all our available resources to review our laws and training procedures so that we protect both the rights of citizens and the safety of our police force."

Senator Golden said, “As a former New York City Police Officer, I stand ready to work with my colleagues and hold these important hearings in the new year. It is our belief that a review of the current structure of governance protecting our law enforcement officers must be conducted. We look forward to the participation of many public safety experts as we review training procedures, pension and disability benefits, and discuss better ways to protect those who keep us safe. The safety of our City and State depends on the strength and support we give those who serve and guard us, and we must make sure we do everything in our power to guarantee their safety.”