



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

## Klein, Benedetto, Vacca Call on Nyc Department of Homeless Services to Ban Sex Offenders From Family Homeless Shelters

JEFFREY D. KLEIN January 23, 2015

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*Bronx Elected Officials Back Legislation That Would Keep Level Two & Three Sex Offenders Out of Shelters Where Families With Children Reside*

**BRONX, NY** – State Senator and Independent Democratic Conference Leader **Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester)**, together with **Assemblyman Michael Benedetto (D-Bronx)**, **Councilman James Vacca (D-Bronx)**, members of Community Board 10, the Ferry Point Civic Association and Friends of Ferry Point Park today called on the New York City Department of Homeless Services to ban level two and level three sex offenders from temporary emergency housing and homeless shelters used to house families with children.

“Allowing high-level sex offenders to stay in family shelters where vulnerable women and children are trying to get back on their feet is not only troublesome but dangerous. With more than 60,000 homeless New Yorkers sleeping in New York City shelters and thousands more out on the street, we need to take every measure to protect those in our care,” **said Senator Klein**. “That’s why I have introduced legislation in the State Senate that would prohibit the NYC Department of Homeless Services from placing these risky offenders in shelters housing women and children. This is a critical measure in ensuring the safety and security of all homeless New Yorkers and I look forward to working with my partners in

Albany to see this important piece of legislation passed in the coming weeks and months.”

The renewed call comes in response to shocking revelations and widespread press reports that two male sex offenders currently reside at the Crystal Family Residence, a new 95-room family shelter and former location of the controversial Capri Whitestone Motel in the Throggs Neck section of the Bronx. Curtis Bolden, a 58-year-old male, convicted on two counts of rape in the first degree and released from prison in 2010, was found to be living at the shelter on January 15th. One week later, James Bryant, a 50-year-old male convicted of molesting a 7-year-old child, was also found to be living at the family shelter.

Senator Klein’s legislation (S.S851-2015) would prevent harmful predators, including level two and level three sex offenders, from being housed in family shelters and require by law that they be placed in adult-only shelters or shelters without children. This important legislation would bring the shelter system up to speed with current social services law that bars level two and level three sex offenders from living in public housing.

“The Department of Homeless services had acted with arrogance when they forced this shelter upon our community and refused to work with with elected leaders in finding an alternative site,” **said Assemblyman Michael Benedetto (D-Bronx)**. “Now they have apparently shown incompetence in selecting a managing agent who doesn’t bother checking whether they are putting sex offenders in a shelter where young children are being housed. This is intolerable.”

“Our shelters are safe havens for families and children experiencing the most difficult of hardships,” **said Bronx Councilman James Vacca**. “We cannot, in good conscience, accept the risk of allowing sex offenders to live in close quarters with these already vulnerable families.”

“We fully support this positive change directed at the safety and welfare of residents at the Crystal Family Residence. This is a significant first step in making New York City shelters safer for the women and children who reside there, but there is still work to be done,” **said Martin Prince, Board Chair of Community Board 10.** “The homeless population in New York has increased astronomically in recent years. Making sure that each and every person who needs a home is provided with the safe haven they so deserve is of the utmost importance.”

“As we try to adjust to this ‘surprise’ homeless shelter that was placed about 200 ft. away from our very populated park, with no security cameras and or Parks Enforcement Patrol we are now shocked by the knowledge that sex offenders imported from other areas are also living among the families without their knowledge,” **said Dortehea Poggi, President of the Friends of Ferry Point Park Organization and member of the Citizens Advice Board for the Crystal Family Residence.** “This is unacceptable by any responsible standards.”

“In our opinion, while it’s nice to provide shelter to those in need, it is not without consequences. It has been brought to our attention that there are registered sex offenders residing at the former Capri Motel, now known as the Crystal Family Residence. The proximity to Msgr. Scanlan High School, Ferry Point Park and the newly developed Target location, as well as residents and homeowners of Ferry Point, is questionable,” **said JoAnn Sohmers, President of the Ferry Point Civic Association.** “Furthermore, sex offenders should not be placed in a home that clearly houses women and children. We fully support Senator Klein's efforts to pass a bill which would ban registered sex offenders from residing in any family homeless shelter.”

The Crystal Family Residence is a family homeless shelter located at 555 Hutchinson River Parkway in the Bronx. The new residence was converted from the former hot-sheet hotel, the Capri Whitestone, in September, 2015.