



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Tony Avella

Times Ledger: Avella wants new criminal charge for police car vandals

TONY AVELLA February 10, 2015

Although it is in its early stages, the PBA already welcomed the idea that calls for a bill to establish a new crime category for people who vandalize law enforcement vehicles.

State Sen. Tony Avella (D-Bayside) said he will introduce a bill to create that new charge for suspects who damage cars owned by law enforcement personnel or agencies.

The lawmaker noted the legislation is in response to an incident that occurred in Brooklyn, where police discovered one of their cruisers and several cars owned by them with lug nuts removed or loosened.

Avella said it appears this act of vandalism was caused by just one person, but “the incident has raised serious concerns about the potential targeting of the officers.”

According to the senator, the bill will create a new provision under the current penal code section for criminal mischief in the second degree. Vandalism of police cars will be a D class felony, punishable by up to seven years in jail.

“When law enforcement becomes a target, it is time to take action,” Avella said. “After I learned of the incident in Brooklyn, my office immediately began looking into legislation.”

The police union is behind Avella’s push to introduce the bill in the state Legislature. The union’s president said vandalism against police cars has become a grave matter.

The proposed legislation “addresses the cowardly and dangerous act of sabotaging police vehicles and the personal automobiles of police officers, which has become a serious problem given the anti-police climate of late,” said Patrick Lunch, president of the PBA. “These actions can result in serious injury or even the death of a police officer and the penalty should be tough.”

Lynch said the PBA will support the bill throughout the legislative process until it becomes law.

Avella said that this is only the first of a series of bill he will introduce in the state Senate in this legislative session.

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