



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daniel L. Squadron

Triborough Electeds Sign on to Bill to Stop Bridge Trespassing

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Momentum for Adams-Squadron-Lentol Bill to Stop Bridge Trespassing Increases After RFK Bridge Incident

NEW YORK – In response to yet another trespassing incident on a New York City bridge -- the RFK Triborough Bridge was breached by climbers on Wednesday, March 25 -- Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams, State Senator Daniel Squadron, and Assemblymember Joseph Lentol announced key support of Bronx, Manhattan and Queens elected officials for their state legislation to raise trespassing penalties on critical infrastructure.

Congressmembers Crowley, Maloney and Rangel; Bronx Borough President Diaz Jr.; State Senators Gianaris and Serrano; Assemblymembers Rodriguez, Simon and Simotas; and Councilmember Constantinides all represent the RFK Triborough Bridge or Brooklyn Bridge, and have now co-sponsored or endorsed the bill.

Wednesday's RFK incident comes following multiple security breaches of the Brooklyn Bridge in the past twelve months. This legislation (S.2190) was announced in November, and would fill a gap in current state law, as well as complement a proposal introduced earlier this year by U.S. Senator Charles Schumer that would make it a federal crime to trespass on critical infrastructure with the intent to commit a crime.

“Whether the Robert F. Kennedy Triborough Bridge, the Brooklyn Bridge or the Lincoln Tunnel, trespassing on our City’s vital infrastructure is too high a risk to be tolerated,” said Brooklyn Borough President Adams. “Trying to see New York City’s beautiful views shouldn’t come while risking the safety of other New Yorkers and visitors. The New York State Legislature must pass the Critical Infrastructure Safety Act to discourage this chronic trespassing on the infrastructure that keeps our City’s economy moving.”

"Each new stunt drains focus and resources from the essential job of protecting New Yorkers and their critical infrastructure," said State Senator Squadron. "I'm grateful that Bronx, Manhattan and Queens elected officials who represent the RFK Bridge now support our proposal following yet another incident. This bill, along with Senator Schumer's effort at the federal level, sends the clear message that in today's world, these enduring breaches are not harmless acts. I thank Borough President Adams for his considered attention on this issue, and will continue working with Assemblymember Lentol, the NYPD, and now the RFK Bridge's delegation of elected officials, to protect critical infrastructure and dissuade costly trespassing."

Assemblymember Lentol said, “As an elected official, the safety of my constituents and all New Yorkers is my number one priority. When people decide to climb bridges or other critical infrastructure they are putting the lives of all New Yorkers in jeopardy. The city does not take these actions lightly. If the NYPD and Fire Department need to send a wide swath of officers to deal with a trespasser, that intruder is taking first responder resources away from the people who really need them. I hope the next time someone thinks of climbing a bridge or other critical infrastructure they think about the other person's life they might be harming, as well as the potential one year of jail they might be serving.”

The Critical Infrastructure Safety Act would apply the same definition used in the Executive Law to protect critical infrastructure from a terrorist attack. Under the bill, a person would be guilty of a Class A Misdemeanor when an

individual trespasses on infrastructure so vital to the state that its disruption, incapacitation or destruction could jeopardize the health, safety, welfare or security of the state, its residents or its economy.

"Not only do these stunts jeopardize the safety of commuters and first responders, they also pose a significant drain on resources," said Congressman Crowley. "I thank Brooklyn Borough President Adams, State Senator Squadron, and Assemblymember Lentol, as well as Senator Schumer, for their collective efforts to further protect our critical infrastructure and ensure our first responders can remain focused on keeping New Yorkers safe."

Congressman Rangel said, "These incidents of trespassing on our city's landmark bridges jeopardize our national security and cause major concerns here at home, especially in highly populated residential communities like East Harlem and Queens, New York. I applaud the efforts to establish strong state laws like the Critical Infrastructure Safety Act and federal legislation that impose severe penalties for trespassing and protect our major infrastructure and transportation networks throughout the City of New York."

Congressman Maloney said "The Critical Infrastructure Safety Act makes clear that it's not a harmless prank to climb a bridge. Not only does it divert crucial manpower, but it also puts our critical infrastructure at risk. Trespassers should face real penalties when they put the healthy, safety, welfare or security of others in jeopardy."

"The consequences of these stunts and pranks must be considerable, so that we do not waste resources investigating someone's attempt to go viral when we have much more important issues to deal with. Increasing the penalties for such stunts is a strong step towards their prevention, and I join my colleagues in supporting this legislation," said Bronx Borough President Diaz Jr.

State Senator Gianaris stated, "Trespassing on our sensitive infrastructure is not just a harmless stunt, it is a threat to our safety and a disruption to our daily lives. When these senseless acts occur and law enforcement is forced to treat them as potential terrorist threats, it drains resources and invokes fear in those of us who remember what it feels like when this city is actually under attack. I commend my colleagues for advancing this proposal and I am glad to co-sponsor this initiative."

"The number of individuals trespassing on our bridges is increasing each day and last week's RFK trespassing incident is yet another reason we must immediately pass this preventative legislation put forth by Borough President Adams, Assemblymember Lentol, and Senator Squadron. Our bridges serve an essential function for the safe passage of goods and services, and can't be recklessly misused. I commend my colleagues for taking the lead and working with the MTA, and NYPD to reduce these life threatening incidents," said Assemblymember Rodriguez.

"It is long past the time that individuals can be permitted to trespass on infrastructure like our bridges. These actions are neither harmless nor entertaining, but unduly disruptive and costly and jeopardize the health, safety, welfare and security of our state, and our country. The proposed penalties should provide a powerful disincentive to engaging in such acts," said Assemblymember Simon.

"Recent cases have clearly demonstrated the need for stricter laws discouraging trespassing on critical infrastructure," said Assemblymember Simotas. "No one has the right to put emergency workers at risk and alarm the public to snap a photograph."

Councilmember Constantinides said, "We are a city surrounded by water and we must ensure the safety of our bridges and tunnels. Disrupting or causing any harm to these critical pieces of our infrastructure would cause potential hazards to public health and safety. The recent trespassing incident along the RFK Bridge makes this potential even more prescient. That's why I endorse the Critical Infrastructure Safety Act, S.2190, which would help protect our city's vital infrastructure. I applaud Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams, State Senator Daniel Squadron, and Assemblymember Joseph Lentol for their leadership on this important issue."