



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

## Senate Passes Lanza's Bill to Improve Information Available About Sexual Predators

ANDREW J LANZA June 2, 2015

| ISSUE: **SEX OFFENDERS**

### *Four Bills Would Help Law Enforcement and Communities Better Monitor Sex Offenders*

The New York State Senate has passed a package of bills to provide increased monitoring of convicted sex offenders and improve access to important information to better notify employers, schools, and concerned members of the community.

A bill ([S4511](#)) sponsored by Senator Andrew Lanza (R-C-I, Staten Island) would help law enforcement and the community keep tabs on lower-level sex offenders. Currently, sex offenders must register with law enforcement by mail on a yearly basis, but Level 3 offenders must also appear in person at the law enforcement agency each year and provide a current photograph. Level 2 offenders, however, must only appear in person and submit such a photograph every three years. Requiring Level 2 sex offenders to appear in person would help law enforcement confirm that the offender is located at the address previously given and that their appearance has not significantly changed.

Senator Lanza said, "For obvious reasons the photographs of moderate and high-risk sex offenders contained in the sex offender registry must be updated and accurate in order for the registry to serve its critical purpose which is to allow the community to be able to know and appreciate any risk existing in our neighborhoods."

The Senate also passed the following bills to help law enforcement and communities better monitor sex offenders:

•€€€ Senate bill [S4765](#) which would make it a felony for a sex offender to fail to appear at the hearing which will determine his or her risk level. The bill also would eliminate a defense currently available to a sex offender who fails to annually verify their address with the state Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). Currently if the sex offender has not changed his or her address, and does not annually verify that address, it is not a violation of the Sex Offender Registration Act. This bill makes that failure to annually verify a class E felony.

•€€€ Senate bill [S4776](#) would expand the information available on the DCJS sex offender registry's website. Currently, the Sex Offender Registration Act does not require all information about sex offenders to be accessible on the state Registry's website. A person must call the 800 number operated by the Division to learn of low-risk offenders in the community. While the 800 number has proven to be useful to businesses and volunteer agencies seeking to screen employees, the number is not available outside normal business hours and the caller must have extensive details such as the sex offender's name and either the offender's exact address, date of birth, social security number, or driver's license number. Making information about all registered sex offenders available on the DCJS website would expand the utility of the Registry and enhance the safety of New York's most vulnerable citizens.

•€€€ Senate bill [S3622](#) would allow law enforcement to disseminate information about a Level 2 sex offender's employment address to vulnerable populations. Currently, Level 2 offenders' employment addresses are included in the online Sex Offender Registry, but law enforcement is only allowed to notify schools and other vulnerable populations of the offender's residence.

The bills have been sent to the Assembly.

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