



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

## Senate passes Griffo's bill to reduce early release of most violent criminals

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO June 2, 2015

| ISSUE: **CRIME, MENTAL HEALTH, VICTIMS, MURDER OR HOMICIDE**

**Legislation stems from 2011 murder of Linda Turner by Robert Blainey in North Utica motel**

ALBANY – The State Senate today passed legislation authored by Senator Joseph Griffo that would prohibit a violent felony offender from being released from prison early if there is convincing evidence that such an inmate would be an imminent threat to society.

Senator Griffo, R-Rome, introduced this bill ([S2720](#)) in response to the 2011 sexual assault and murder of 68-year-old Linda Turner at the motel she owned in North Utica. Turner's brutal death occurred tragically after her killer, repeat rapist Robert Blainey, had been released early from prison despite his own admission that "Society is safer with me in prison."

Although the state Board of Parole believed that Blainey should not have been released from prison, the Parole Board did not have any legal authority to hold him any longer: Blainey was required to serve only two-thirds of his indeterminate sentence of 12 ½ to 25 years due to the merit time he accumulated for being well-behaved in prison.

Under current state law, the Parole Board had no option but to release Blainey as long as he signed the

terms for his conditional release, even though he warned the board he may re-offend if sent back to Oneida County.

“Linda Turner’s killer made very clear that he was a ticking time bomb who never should have been allowed back into society, but the state Parole Board’s hands were tied,” Griffo said. “It is unconscionable that the state Parole Board could believe an inmate is dangerous, yet have no choice but to watch that person walk back out on the street without serving their full sentence. We have a duty to our community and victims of crimes to incarcerate violent individuals for as long as legally possible, and this proposed legislation would allow the discretion to ensure that no threat is set loose before their time is up.”

In the years since Turner’s death, a number of violent felony offenders have gone on to commit further violent crimes and murder after being released on parole, including most recently Demetrius Blackwell, the man accused of fatally shooting New York City Police Officer Brian Moore last month.

Senator Griffo’s legislation has now been referred to the Assembly for further action.

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