



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Seward: Families Have Suffered Enough, Extend Time Between Parole Hearings For Violent Offenders

JAMES L. SEWARD June 9, 2015

| ISSUE: **CRIME**

ONEONTA, 06/09/15 – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I-Oneonta) today announced senate passage of legislation he co-sponsors which would allow the New York State Parole Board to extend the period of time between reconsidering parole board denials from two years to five years when the inmate was sentenced for a violent crime.

“To understand how this law would work you need to look no further than the murder of 18 year old Gillian ‘Jill’ Gibbons in 1989 in Oneonta,” said Senator Seward. **“The convicted killer David Dart received a parole hearing last year and will have another in 2016. We are talking about a confessed murderer who threatened the victim’s sister following his conviction. He stands virtually no chance of being paroled next year, and it is unconscionable to force the family to contend with another hearing so soon.”**

Currently, when parole is denied, the board has the discretion to set the date for reconsideration for parole for any date within two years. [Senate bill 1483](#), which is co-sponsored by Seward, would allow the parole board to extend the period of time between reconsidering denials from two years to five years.

In many cases, especially murder and other violent offenses, parole is denied multiple times and extending the timeframe for reconsideration would give the parole board greater discretion in setting hearing dates.

“When a victim and a victim’s family endure an act of violence, a great deal of healing must take place, both physically and mentally. Forcing these individuals to relive a horrendous crime every two years is unnecessary and extreme,” Seward added.

The senate has passed this legislation on multiple occasions, but the assembly has never voted on the measure. Companion legislation (A.1680) has been introduced in the assembly this year and bill sponsors are actively pursuing the measure in hopes it will receive assembly approval before the legislative session concludes later this month.