



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Town Of Danby Concerns Prompt Seward Bill To Change State Sex Offender Notification Law

JAMES L. SEWARD June 15, 2015

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ALBANY, 06/15/15 -- State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I – Oneonta) today announced senate passage of legislation he sponsored ([S.5153](#)) to ensure the public is properly notified of the sex offender status of group home residents.

“The senate has acted on a number of bills this year meant to safeguard and inform the public in regard to dangerous sex offenders,” said Senator Seward. **“Many times, these measures are needed to close previously undetected loopholes in our laws – that is the case in this instance.”**

Under current law, several factors must be disclosed to the public when a location is being considered for a group home for the developmentally disabled. The home’s address, type of residence, number of residents, and community supports must all be revealed.

Senator Seward’s legislation would also force group home proposals to list one other key piece of information - the sex offender status of potential residents.

“Clearly, neighbors deserve to know if a group home will be housing sex offenders. Omitting this piece of information, either deliberately or inadvertently, is wrong and could endanger neighboring residents,” Seward added.

Senator Seward drafted his legislation in response to a situation in the Town of Danby.

Several months ago, plans to house two sex offenders in a group home in the town generated a great deal of concern. One of the main issues was that the public was kept in the dark about the proposed home until very late in the process.

“Public safety should not be put at risk due to legal loopholes. The concerned citizens and local officials in the Town of Danby are to be commended for speaking out and bringing this situation to light. Now, I am hopeful the assembly will act on this measure as well so other communities won’t have to be kept in the dark about the whereabouts of convicted sex offenders,” Seward concluded.

The bill has been sent to the assembly.