



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas D. Croci

SENATOR CROCI ANNOUNCES STATE SENATE HAS PASSED BILLS TO BETTER PROTECT CHILDREN AND COMMUNITIES FROM SEXUAL PREDATORS

THOMAS D. CROCI March 16, 2016

| ISSUE: **CHILD ABUSE, CHILD MOLESTATION**



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PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Hauppauge, NY – Senator Thomas Croci (R, C, I – Sayville) and the New York State Senate passed four bills to protect children and communities from sex offenders. The measures increase penalties for sexual abuse and sexual contact with minors, require group homes to notify municipalities of the sex offender status of potential residents, and restrict child care providers from hiring employees with criminal convictions.

“Increasing the penalty of second degree sexual abuse of a child from a misdemeanor to a felony and increasing the penalty to a violent felony for sexual contact with a child by a person in a position of trust – such as by a teacher or caretaker, will help to convict predators to stricter punishments for victimizing an innocent child in this way,” stated Senator Croci. “We are also providing an important tool to our municipalities by making it mandatory that they are notified regarding the placement of sex offenders in their jurisdiction and are denying caretakers from being licensed to care for a child if they have felony charges such as these. I hope the Assembly and Governor will join us in this fight against sexual predators by passing this package of legislation quickly,” said Senator Croci.

A bill (S6679) sponsored by Senator Michael Nozzolio (R-C, Fayette), would increase the penalty for sexual abuse in the second degree, from a class A misdemeanor to a class E

felony. Under current law, a felony charge is only applicable if there is force, if the victim is incapable of giving consent, or if the victim is less than 11-years-old. Perpetrators who fondle or come into sexual contact with victims between the ages of 11 and 13 are only eligible for up to one year in prison.

Another bill (S6680) sponsored by Senator Nozzolio would increase criminal penalties for sexual contact between a minor and a “person in a position of trust” – a person who is responsible for the health, education, welfare, or supervision of a child. The bill would increase these crimes to violent felony offenses.

A measure (S5153) sponsored by Senator James L. Seward (R-C-I, Oneonta) would require disclosure and notification to a municipality when a proposed group home or community residence has been selected as housing for a sex offender, and to disclose the number of residents who are sex offenders.

Another bill (S1472A) sponsored by Senator Martin J. Golden (R-C-I, Brooklyn) would ensure that young children are not being cared for by felons with a history of serious crimes including sexual abuse of children.

Currently, the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) can approve a child care license or employment application – even if the applicant has a criminal history – if OCFS thinks the approval will not jeopardize the health, safety, or welfare of the children in the center, program, or home. This legislation requires OCFS to deny the license or employment application if a background check reveals any felony convictions in New York State or any other jurisdiction for a sex offense, a crime against a child, or a crime involving violence, or if a conviction for a felony drug-related offense occurred within the past five years.

The bills will be sent to the Assembly.

All media inquiries should be directed to Senator Croci's Communications Specialist, Christine Geed at (631) 398-8044 (call or text) or via email at geed@nysenate.gov. Inquiries for additional information should be directed to Senator Croci's Press Secretary, Jennifer Romero at (631) 513-5657 or via email at jromero@nysenate.gov