



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

## Klein passes “Ildefonso Romero Jr.’s Law” to create new felony charge for one-punch crimes

JEFFREY D. KLEIN March 23, 2016

| ISSUE: **CRIME VICTIMS, CRIME, VIOLENCE, LEGISLATURE**

*Bill would create charge for aggravated assault leading to serious injury or death*

**Albany, NY** — The New York State Senate passed “Ildefonso Romero, Jr.’s Law,” sponsored by **State Senator Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester)** on Wednesday. The law would create a new felony charge for an aggravated assault that results in serious injury or death.

The passage of the bill comes nearly two years after the tragic death of Ildefonso Romero, Jr. who was killed as he attempted to break up a fight in front of his Bronx home. While trying to shield a young woman in danger, a 17-year-old man fatally punched 59-year-old Romero in the head.

“Ildefonso Romero, Jr. tried to help a young woman under attack and with one punch, his life was senselessly ended. Now, with Julio Torres’ death, we see yet another tragic story that tells us exactly why this legislation is so important. Once again, the Senate has sent a message in Ildefonso Romero, Jr.’s name, that when a perpetrator uses his fist as a weapon to cause serious injury or death there will be a serious price to pay. No family should ever go through the grief of losing a loved one and then watching his killer get a slap on the wrist. This legislation would finally close a glaring loophole in the penal code, and I urge my

colleagues in the Assembly to pass it," **said Senator Klein.**

Also known as the "one-punch bill," "Ildefonso Romero, Jr.'s Law" arms prosecutors with a tool to charge and convict perpetrators who use their fists as deadly weapons. It creates a new class E felony offense that carries a maximum prison term of four years.

Police reports indicate that "one-punch" crimes are on the rise and videos illustrating "one-punch" or sucker punch techniques are proliferating online.

Just this past year, yet another father was taken from his family by a violent assailant who went unpunished.

Julio Torres was relieved to hear that his lost credit card was found. However, when the person returned it to him, he demanded that Torres buy him a drink in return. When Torres declined, his hero turned into his attacker - and ultimately delivered the deadly blow to his head.

Torres suffered a traumatic brain injury for seven months before passing. He was taken from his family - his partner, Fiona Hill-Samuel, and his two-year-old son - after spending those months in hospital facilities, completely incapacitated. For robbing Torres of his life, and with a history of felony assault on his record, his attacker received a mere 15 months in prison.

"Our two-year-old son is now left without a father. His case and others like it are reflection of the failure of current state law as a preventative measure against violence and as a form of protection," **said Hill-Samuel.** "What precedent do cases such as my partner's and Ildefonso Romero set to the youth of New York: that it's ok to give a man brain damage and ultimately cause his death and the worst that will happen to you is a misdemeanor charge? This bill needs to be made law so that the public knows that violent assault will not be tolerated in

our state, that if a person causes serious physical injury to another human being they will be tried for a felony no matter what. This bill needs to be made law now before more similar violent crimes are committed and lives ruined.”

Ildefonso Romero Jr’s perpetrator received only five-months imprisonment for the deadly blow, because the court could only charge his attacker with a misdemeanor. The lack of justice devastated his family.

Ildefonso Romero, Jr., who worked at Lincoln Hospital, was a father of five and just about to celebrate his 34th wedding anniversary at the time of the deadly attack. His family had been planning a surprise 60th birthday party for him on the day he intervened in the fatal June 21, 2014 fight. They were heartbroken.

“My family and I are extremely grateful for the continuous support from Senator Klein, Assemblyman Sepulveda, the Senators and all the Assembly Members. We are so happy that we have reached the passage of the bill in the Senate. We are hoping that with the passage of this bill in my father’s name that there will be justice for families and no one will go through what our family has endured. It has been extremely difficult for my family especially as the one year anniversary of his death approaches. There will be nothing that will bring my father back, but a bill being passed in his name will at least bring some peace to our hearts. We want to make a difference in the lives of others. That is what my dad would have wanted,” **said the victim’s daughter, Jennifer Perez.**

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