



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Rich Funke

## Senate passes Funke bills to root out, crack down on sex offenders

RICH FUNKE May 25, 2016

The New York State Senate today passed S.4776, a bill sponsored by Senator Rich Funke, which would expand the information available on the State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) sex offender registry's website. The Senate also passed S.4765, a bill sponsored by Funke that would make it a felony for a sex offender to fail to appear at a court hearing to determine the risk level of the offender. Both bills passed with bipartisan support.

"To keep kids safe from dangerous predators, information and enforcement are two of our most powerful preventative tools," said Funke. "Cracking down on offenders who don't register with the state and making more ID information available to the public are common sense ways to stop assaults before they happen. I'm proud to have worked with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to get these proposals passed in the Senate and I hope they receive support in the Assembly as well."

S.4776 would address a failure in the current Sex Offender Registration Act that does not require all information about sex offenders to be accessible on the state Registry's website. Instead, a person must call the 800 number operated by the state to learn of low-risk offenders in their community. While the 800 number has proven to be useful to businesses and volunteer agencies seeking to screen employees, the number is not available outside normal business hours and the caller must have extensive details such as the sex offender's name and either the offender's exact address, date of birth, social security number, or driver's

license number. This bill would make more information about all registered sex offenders available on the DCJS website to expand the utility of the Registry and enhance the safety of New York's most vulnerable citizens.

In addition to making it a felony for a sex offender to fail to appear at a risk level determination hearing, S.4765 would also eliminate a defense currently available to a sex offender who fails to annually verify his or her address with DCJS. Currently, if the sex offender has not changed his or her address, and does not annually verify his or her address, it is not a violation of the Sex Offender Registration Act. This bill makes any failure to annually verify a class E felony.

The bills have been sent to the Assembly.