



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

## SERINO SEEKS TO DETER CRIMES AGAINST FIRST RESPONDERS

SUSAN SERINO January 30, 2017



ALBANY, NY—Senator Sue Serino (R, C, I—Hyde Park), today joined a bi-partisan group of lawmakers and first responders at a press conference in Albany to call for the passage of a bill she co-sponsors that would designate crimes committed against first responders as ‘hate crimes.’

“The sad fact is, we’ve seen an undeniable uptick in first responders being targeted across the country,” said Senator Serino. “These individuals put their lives on the line every day to keep

us safe and we have a duty to ensure that our legal system is doing all that it can to protect them in return.”

Specifically, the bill (S. 1114) would classify offenses intentionally committed against first responders—including law enforcement officers, corrections officers, firefighters, and emergency services personnel—as hate crimes. Known as the ‘Community Heroes Protection Act’, the bill’s prime sponsors are Senator Fred Akshar (R-C-I-Ref, Colesville) and Assemblyman Peter Abbate Jr. (D-49th A.D.).

At the press conference, members of both the Senate and Assembly as well as first responders and advocates lined up to express support for the bill including Assemblymember Pamela Harris (D-Brooklyn) who bravely recounted her personal story of being brutally assaulted by an inmate while she was working as a New York City Corrections Officer. Fighting back tears, Assemblymember Harris argued that it was hate for her uniform that made her a target in the attack and she voiced support for the legislation as a means to improve safety for those who voluntarily sign-up to serve.

Dan Sisto, Vice President and Legislative Director of the New York State Troopers PBA, also spoke and was quick to note that if the safety of a first responder is endangered and their ability to perform their duty is compromised, it can directly interfere with the safety of the community as a whole.

Serino agreed saying, “When the safety of a first responder is intentionally threatened—when they are targeted solely for the uniform that they selfless sign-up to wear—it can set off a chain reaction that. in turn. can endanger those in the community who they were trying to protect. Passing this bill is about deterring crimes against our first responders, and that starts with building trust and improving safety for our communities

and those who serve them.”

The legislation has been referred to the Codes Committee in each house of the Legislature.

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