



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

## State Senate passes Senator Savino's bill to stiffen penalties for 'subway grinders'

JEFFREY D. KLEIN June 7, 2017

| ISSUE: **SEX OFFENDERS, CRIME, CRIME VICTIMS**

*Reports of subway sex crimes rise over three year period, including 'grinding' and public lewdness*

**Albany, NY** — The New York State Senate passed legislation sponsored by Senator Diane Savino (**D-SI/Brooklyn**) on Wednesday to stiffen penalties for subway predators who forcibly touch or "grind" on passengers or expose themselves on public transportation.

The bill passed 57 to 5.

"We need to stop subway grinders in their tracks and increasing penalties is a major deterrent to this abhorrent behavior. Subway grinding and lewdness are serious crimes that threaten and humiliate victims who are simply trying to get to school, work or home. My legislation treats these crimes seriously and I hope we can finally make this law," **said Senator Savino.**

On Tuesday, Senator Savino released "Perverved Justice: How Subway Grinders Continue to Victimize New Yorkers," which examines the alarming increase in sex crimes reported on the city's subway system since 2014.

Sex crimes on the subway are on the rise by over 51.7 percent over a three-year period due to an increase in reporting.

The MTA in recent years has made it easier to report sex crimes on the transit system, creating an online page that allows victims to report incidents and upload photos or audio files. The report found a sizeable increase in reports since 2014 when victims reported 620 sex crimes, followed by 738 in 2015 and 941 in 2016. There's been a 9% increase from January 1, 2017 to May 28, 2017 from the same point in time last year.

The report also looked at the category of offenses, finding a sizeable increase in forcible touching from 2015-2016. An increase in public lewdness was also found.

Unfortunately, most of those arrested are repeat offenders who either evade prosecution or serve minimal incarceration, resulting in their ability to continue to victimize subway passengers.

"Subway grinders" earned the moniker for sidling up to victims on crowded subway cars and rubbing against them. Under Senator Savino's legislation, forcible touching or "grinding" on public transportation would become a Class-D felony punishable by up to one-to-seven years imprisonment. This crime currently carries an impotent misdemeanor penalty of one-year in prison and most offenders wind up with little to no jail time.

The penalty for an act of public lewdness on public transportation, another provision of Senator Savino's legislation, would increase from three-months to one-year in prison.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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**2017-S3861**

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- Introduced
  - - In Committee Assembly
    - In Committee Senate
  - - On Floor Calendar Assembly
    - On Floor Calendar Senate
  - - Passed Assembly
    - Passed Senate
  - Delivered to Governor
  - Signed By Governor
  -

Relates to sexual abuse in the first degree where a person is incapable of consent while a passenger on public transportation

January 27, 2017

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by **Diane J. Savino**

Do you support this bill?