Senate passes legislation sponsored by Sen. Griffo that increases bank robbery penalties

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ALBANY - State Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-Rome, announced today that the Senate has passed legislation (S2421) sponsored by the Senator that increases the penalties for the robbery of a bank or other financial institutions.

Over the past decade, there has been an increase in the number of bank robberies committed throughout the state, especially crimes in which threatening notes and comments are made to bank tellers during the robbery. Late last year, for instance, a suspect in a robbery of an Adirondack Bank branch in Utica was arrested after police said that the man had passed a note to a teller demanding money and threatening violence if an alarm was activated. No weapon was reportedly displayed.

One continuing problem is that perpetrators of these criminal acts perceive this as a mild type of crime that is not punished as seriously as other, similar types of crimes. Sen. Griffo's bill, however, would increase the penalty for robbing a bank or financial institution to a class C felony.

"My goal in developing this legislation is to increase the safety of employees and consumers in our local banks, while also sending a message to potential criminals that robbing a bank is not a victimless crime," Sen. Griffo said. "It is a crime that we take very seriously and should punish very strongly. The bill would establish meaningful penalties to serve as an effective deterrent to these crimes and punish those who violate it appropriately."

If the act is signed into law, it would go into effect on the Nov. 1 following the bill being official signed by the Governor. There also is a companion bill in the state Assembly. That legislation – A2729 – is sponsored by state Assemblyman Charles Lavine, D-Glen Cove.

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