



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie Calls for Renewed Focus on School Safety

BRIAN DWYER February 28, 2018

| ISSUE: **SCHOOL SAFETY**



In an effort to improve safety in schools across New York State and in the region she represents, State Senator Patty Ritchie is advocating for a number of efforts to better protect children and teachers from harm, as well as to improve mental health services for students.

Among the changes being proposed by Senator Ritchie is the restoration of a program—known as the School Resource Officer Program—that places law enforcement officers inside schools to enhance security. School Resource Officers are State Police and

local police who are assigned, full-time, to schools during the day. They can play a role in helping protect students from not only violence, but also drugs and alcohol, bullying and other issues inside our schools.

Nearly a decade ago, due to budget cuts, the New York State Police ended its School Resource Officer Program, leaving many districts to find a way to implement the service provided by the School Resource Officers on their own. Since becoming a senator in 2011, Senator Ritchie has been advocating for a return of the program.

“The safety of our children—especially in a place like a school—has to be among our top priorities,” said Senator Ritchie.

“It is incumbent on all of us to look for ways to make our schools safer. From restoring the School Resource Officer Program to improving mental health services, there are a number of efforts we can pursue to ensure that our students, and all who work to educate them, are safe.”

In addition to advocating for the placement of law enforcement officers schools statewide, Senator Ritchie has also introduced a measure, ([S7816](#)) that would provide all teachers—as well as staff members who have significant, daily student contact—with wearable, personal safety alarms so they can instantly alert administrators and call for help in the event of an emergency.

Senator Ritchie will also be taking the following steps in the very near future to help ensure student and educator safety:

- Introducing Legislation that would direct the New York State Police and NYS Homeland Security to review school safety plans for every school district—a step that would provide school districts with an additional tool to identify security gaps and then address them.

- Supporting a measure that would waive the law that limits how much a retired police officer can earn if they want to work as a school security officer; and

- Working to ensure children have access to mental health counseling and support services in schools, while also calling for a top-to-bottom review of how New York State provides mental health services to students.

In addition, Senator Ritchie will also be meeting with superintendents from school districts she represents in the coming week, to hear their feedback on what tools and resources they need to prevent any potential tragedies.

Senator Ritchie's push for improved school safety continues her efforts to keep students and educators safe. In recent years, she has successfully advocated for improved school security protocols, including a requirement that districts designate a 'Chief Emergency Officer', mandating that all school staff undergo annual emergency plan training and requiring schools to hold four 'lockdown' drills each school year.

RELATED LEGISLATION

2017-S7816

- 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
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Relates to authorizing certain school personnel to wear personal safety alarms

February 28, 2018

In Senate Committee [Rules](#)

Sponsored by [Patty Ritchie](#)

Do you support this bill?