



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Senator Young Co-Sponsors Legislation to Treat Mass Shootings as Acts of Domestic Terrorism

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Albany, NY - There is a major gap between how government and law enforcement treat different kinds of potential threats against the civilian populace. In the wake of yet another mass shooting, a coalition of State Senators from across New York have introduced legislation (S.7813) which seeks to remedy that by treating mass shootings as acts of terrorism.

"All perceived violence that threaten the lives of others, whether at a concert, place of worship or school, are terrorist threats, and must be handled in the same manner," State Senator Terrence Murphy said. "Just as we took action to keep ourselves safe from international terrorism in the wake of 9/11, the time has come to clamp down and focus attention on preventing other types of mass casualty events using the same tools."

Senator Catharine Young said, "As Americans continue to grieve the loss of 17 innocent lives lost in Parkland, Florida, we are all asking why numerous tips to law enforcement fell through the cracks. Devastating thoughts of 'what if' will haunt these families, students and individuals affected by this horrific tragedy. That should never happen. The legislation we propose today would help close any potential gaps. By classifying mass shootings as 'terrorism,' we would empower the formidable federal and state intelligence gathering resources of the New York State Intelligence Center towards preventing these crimes. They possess the expertise, technology and manpower to thoroughly investigate reports by educators, family members, friends, therapists and anyone else who may see warning signs that an individual may be planning a mass shooting. We owe it to our children, families and all New Yorkers to do everything we can to prevent tragedies like the one in Parkland."

The bill also codifies the New York State Intelligence Center, a federally authorized intelligence gathering partnership between the FBI, CIA, State Police, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services and local policing agencies, and adds a mandate for the Intelligence Center to prevent mass shootings.

"Communication between law enforcement agencies at the federal and state level is vital to keeping our communities safe. Any threat intended to cause mass casualties is undoubtedly a terrorist act and should be treated as such," Senator George Amedore said.

"Law enforcement must have every tool we can give them to prevent and respond to the use of firearms to harm our residents. Whether it is an ISIS inspired attack or a deeply mentally troubled individual, if the intent is to cause fear and terror and do harm to innocent civilians, we must call it what it is, and act." said Senator Tom Croci

The proposed legislation would reference mass shootings in the statute describing the acts of terrorism. The bill clarifies that a school, house of worship or business could be considered a "civilian population" when a terrorist discharges or attempts to affect the conduct of such areas by discharging a weapon with the intent to cause harm.