



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Todd Kaminsky

## Kaminsky, Elected Officials Unveil Legislation To Prohibit Armed Teachers In Schools

TODD KAMINSKY March 16, 2018

| ISSUE: **GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION**



(Rockville Centre, New York) —Senator Todd Kaminsky unveiled legislation today to prohibit teachers from carrying guns in schools. Kaminsky was joined by Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Rockville Centre Schools Superintendent Dr. William Johnson, advocacy groups, Senator John Brooks, local teachers and students.

“More guns does not equal safer schools,” said Senator Todd Kaminsky. “Calls to arm our teachers are merely a distraction from urgently needed, common sense gun safety measures, increased funding for mental health services, and funding for hardening technology for our schools. No one other than law enforcement has any business carrying a gun in a school. Our teachers want to focus on educating our students, and injecting more guns into our schools can lead to increasing dangerous situations and keeps us from enacting real solutions to reduce mass shootings and everyday gun violence in our state.”

Spurred by calls following last month’s tragic school shooting to arm educators instead of passing common-sense gun control and mental health measures, Senator Kaminsky sponsored the legislation announced today in order to ensure New York teachers are not required to carry firearms in the classroom. Should federal restrictions on guns in school zones be lifted, current New York law would allow a pathway for teachers to carry firearms. Today’s legislation would prohibit that.

Earlier this week, a teacher shot himself in a Georgia high school. The bill would amend the Penal Law, ensuring that only credentialed law enforcement officers and security guards may possess firearms on school grounds.

“Arming teachers is absurd, and not the way we should be protecting our kids or our schools. Putting guns in the hands of our educators, and having the taxpayers shoulder the enormous costs involved is not the answer to this crisis. That is why I applaud Senator Kaminsky for advancing legislation to ensure that only public protection officers will be allowed to carry firearms on school grounds. Protecting our children will require smart gun laws, including ensuring only well-trained officers have access to weapons in any education institution, as well as keeping firearms away from dangerous individuals,” said Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins.

“Anything we can do to keep guns out of schools is a step in the direction of maintaining safety for all of our students,” said Dr. William Johnson, Rockville Centre Schools Superintendent.

“It’s sad that we even have to have a conversation about keeping our schools safe from gun violence -- but we do, and I’m glad Senator Kaminsky is stepping up with legislation that will ensure we don't embark on a path that will make matters worse,” said State Senator Brian Kavanagh, chair of New York Legislators for Gun Violence Prevention. “The fact is, New York has one of the lowest rates of gun-related deaths in the nation because we have some of the strongest gun laws, and because of effective police work and community anti-violence programs. Of course we can do more, and we have to make choices about security -- but we can't let our attention be diverted by misguided ideas from the core task of keeping guns out of the hands of those who would use them to harm children as well as adults. Even the best school safety plan is no substitute for strong laws -- and arming teachers certainly isn't the answer. The only things we should be arming our teachers with are better books, more supplies, and the other resources they need to educate our children. I look forward to working with Senator Kaminsky on this legislation.”

“Rather than implementing real, effective solutions to reduce gun violence, Washington extremists are telling our teachers it is now up to them to defend our children. We shouldn't be arming teachers with guns, we should arm them with resources to educate our children. Only trained law enforcement and security professionals should handle guns near our schools, end of story. I applaud my Democratic colleagues for standing up for meaningful, common sense gun control measures to tackle this violence head on, while the Senate Republican Majority stands idly by ignoring our children who are demanding action,” said Senator John Brooks.

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March 05, 2018

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