



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

## The Bell Tolls for Killers: Senator Murphy's Tough Legislation Will Put Anyone Who Murders A First Responder In Jail For Life

TERRENCE MURPHY May 2, 2018

| ISSUE: **FIRST RESPONDERS, COP KILLER, FIREFIGHTERS, EMS, POLICE**



Albany, NY - In late April, Herman Bell, a convicted cop killer, walked out of prison after spending nearly 40 years behind bars. His release traumatized the families of the victims he had murdered and disgusted first responders and elected officials who had petitioned Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Parole Board to deny his release.

As a former first responder and an avid supporter of the men and women who put their lives

on the line to help others, Senator Terrence Murphy was both offended and infuriated by the decision to free Bell. In response, and to keep future injustices from occurring, Senator Murphy sponsored S7976, a bill requiring a sentence of life imprisonment without parole for murder in the first degree involving the killing of a first responder.

"I can summarize my remarks in two words: 'Herman Bell'. Herman Bell's recent release from prison is an outrage. He set out to kill two police officers. It was premeditated, cold-blooded murder," said Senator Murphy. "What this bill does is protect the firefighters that run into a burning building to save us. It protects police officers that are taking bullets in the streets. It protects EMS personnel that show up at accidents and safely take the injured to a hospital. In short, this bill protects those who protect us. There should be no parole for anyone who murders a police officer, firefighter or any emergency responder. You murder a hero, you go to jail for life, no questions asked."

Senator Murphy's floor speech can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

"On behalf of the more than 5,000 law enforcement officers throughout Westchester County, I commend Sen. Terrence Murphy for his common sense legislation that helps protect police officers and all first responders," stated Detective Keith Olson, President of the Yonkers Police Benevolent Association. "Once again, Senator Murphy has proven himself a tremendous advocate for the men and women in law enforcement."

Michael Hagan, Police Benevolent Association President for the Westchester County Police Department said, "We ask our first responders to run toward danger to protect people from those who prey on society. When one of those predators takes the life of a first responder, the message must be loud and clear, there is only one place left in society for you, and that is a prison cell. Thank you, Senator Murphy, for having our backs."

"I couldn't agree more that parole shouldn't be an option for any individual who murders a first responder," said Yorktown Police Chief Robert Noble. "These type of murderers are beyond rehabilitation and pose a continuing threat to law-abiding citizens as well as firefighters, EMS and police officers in all our communities."

On May 21, 1971, Bell, Anthony Bottom and Albert Washington placed a fake 911 call, luring Officers Joseph Piagentini and Waverly Jones to the Colonial Park Houses on W. 159th Street in Harlem. They ambushed the Officers, killing Jones instantly. Piagentini begged for his life, telling Bell and his partners he had a wife and two children, but the three suspects ignored his pleas and took their time killing Piagentini - shooting him 22 times.

Bell was arrested about a year later. He was also implicated in the August 1971 murder of a police officer in San Francisco and convicted of voluntary manslaughter. All three suspects were convicted of the two murders and sentenced to 25 years to life in 1979. Bell was released from the maximum-security in Shawangunk Correctional Facility in April and moved to Brooklyn, where he is expected to be monitored for the rest of his life. Washington died in prison. Bottom, now 66, has a parole hearing scheduled for June.