



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David Carlucci

## Senator Carlucci's Bill To Reform Criminal Justice System And Expand Problem-Solving Courts Passes In The New York State Senate

SENATOR CARLUCCI March 27, 2019

| ISSUE: **CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM**

**Albany, NY - Senator David Carlucci** (D-Rockland/Westchester) passed legislation today (**S.3889/A.5937**) in the New York State Senate that will allow the expansion of problem-solving courts and allow cases to be transferred from town and city courts to problem-solving courts already in their respective counties.

Problem-solving courts are specialty courts that look at the whole individual and focus on a path toward treatment instead of jail. It could be a veteran's court, mental health court, domestic violence court, youth court, or homeless court. Problem-solving courts have a dedicated judge who, along with court staff, is trained in issues unique to that court type, including: increased engagement with litigants and close coordination between the problem-solving court and outside groups. These courts seek new approaches, including judicial monitoring and the incorporation of community resources.

“Currently, local town and city criminal justice courts cannot transfer mental health cases, domestic abuse cases or youth offender cases to specialty courts who could better handle certain offenders. This legislation corrects this problem so towns and cities can actually utilize the problem-solving courts in their county or start them. We

need rehabilitation instead of incarceration, and this is a step in the right direction,” **said Senator David Carlucci.**

“Problem solving courts are a wonderful resource for individuals who could benefit from more specialized care,” **said Assemblywoman Galef**, who carries the bill in the Assembly. “When towns and cities are not able to utilize these courts, we do a disservice to those who could be offered a more holistic approach as an alternative to incarceration. I am pleased to see this legislation pass the Senate today, and will continue to advocate for its passage in the Assembly.”

According to the National Center For State Courts, most research indicates that problem-solving courts reduce recidivism, substance abuse, jail overcrowding, crime, and victimization. This is attributed to the fact that people are getting more of the services and treatment they need. Research also shows this comprehensive approach increases community safety by reducing re-offending and saves taxpayers money by diverting people from being incarcerated.

New York State now has 141 drug courts, 29 mental health courts, and 42 integrated domestic violence courts. Outside of New York City, the state has about 1,300 town and village courts.

This legislation has the support of Rockland County's former District Attorney Thomas Zugibe and the District Attorney's Association.