



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patrick M. Gallivan

## Senator Gallivan Renews Call for School Resource Officers in All NY Schools

JIM RANNEY September 3, 2019

| ISSUE: **SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER, SCHOOL SAFETY**



Senator Patrick M. Gallivan (R-C-I, Elma) is renewing his call to establish a statewide school resource officer program for districts seeking to enhance safety. The effort follows the recent release of an audit by New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, which showed too many schools had deficiencies in their safety plans. Senator Gallivan says a comprehensive SRO program would assist schools in developing safety plans and further deter school violence.

“With a new school year getting underway, we must do all we can to ensure our schools are safe for students, faculty and staff,” Senator Gallivan said. “The Comptroller’s audit raises concerns and indicates our schools need help in keeping their facilities secure. School resource officer, or SRO’s, can assist in developing, adopting and implementing safety plans by working with administrators, staff, students and parents to identify security issues, train personnel and resolve conflicts before they become more serious. It is time to establish a statewide SRO program, so that every school benefits from having a trained law-enforcement officer on-site.”

According to Comptroller DiNapoli, auditors examined safety plans at more than 17 school districts and 2 charter schools across the state. They found that none of the safety plans, which are required under the New York State Safe Schools Against Violence in Education Act, met all the minimum requirements.

“It is clear that our schools need more resources to develop and implement these important safety plans,” Senator Gallivan said. “As a former State Trooper and Sheriff of Erie County, I believe a strong SRO program is a proactive approach to keeping our schools safe.”

Senator Gallivan has introduced an omnibus bill (S.1330) that would clearly define school resource officer and, for the first time, provide an important state aid component to allow school districts across the state to fund the program. The legislation would amend state education law to make the hiring of a school resource officer by a public school district or a charter school a shared service eligible for aid. It would also provide a reimbursement grant program for the hiring of an SRO in a non-public school.

The legislation would also require a SRO to be an experienced active duty or retired member of law enforcement, such as a police officer, state trooper or deputy sheriff. Retired individuals already possess the necessary experience and training required to do the job. The bill would provide retired police officers who are employed as SRO's with full peace officer powers, giving them the ability to arrest as well as carry a weapon on school grounds while on duty.

Additionally, the bill would amend the state's retirement and social security law to allow school districts to hire retired police officers without needing a waiver for an annual salary of less than \$50,000. Under current law, retired public employees must apply for a waiver in order to earn more than \$30,000 per year. The present cap on earnings can deter the best-qualified and most experienced officers from becoming a SRO.

The legislation has been sent to the Senate's Education Committee.

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## 2019-S1330

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