



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo and Buttenschon sponsoring bill criminalizing threats of mass violence

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New York State Senate Deputy Minority Leader Joseph Griffo, R-I-C-Rome, and Assemblywoman Marianne Buttenschon, D-Marcy, today advocated for legislation they are sponsoring that would criminalize threats of mass violence against schools and other places where groups of people gather.

The Mohawk Valley has seen its share of threats of mass violence. Last year, Fahrudin Omerovic called in several threats to Utica College, resulting in the campus going on lockdown for several hours, the evacuation of students and staff and a heavy police presence. More recently, alleged threats have been made to several schools in the region.

The bill (S8312) sponsored by Deputy Minority Leader Griffo and Assemblywoman Buttenschon would amend the penal law. It would establish a new crime of making a threat of mass violence toward a school, college or university, place of worship, mass gathering of 25 people or more or a business if the threat is made in writing, verbally communicated or expressed through any other means of communication.

The legislation creates two crimes:

- Making a threat of mass violence in the first degree would be considered a class D felony and would apply to anyone 18 years of age or older. The punishment for this crime would be a \$35,000 fine and a sentence of no less than three years in prison.
- Making a threat of mass violence in the second degree apply to individuals under the age of 18 and carry a fine of \$35,000 and a mandatory sentence of 10 days in a juvenile detention facility. Individuals over 18 who make a threat of mass violence against the school that they are attending would be charged with the same crime and administered the same punishment as an individual under the age of 18.

“Sadly, we have seen threats of mass violence made in various schools and communities throughout our region and New York State,” Deputy Minority Leader Griffo said. “However, the current consequences of making such threats are minor. This legislation will establish stern repercussions for individuals threatening mass violence and will show perpetrators that there are real consequences for their actions. I thank Assemblywoman Buttenschon for

supporting this legislation and am looking forward to working with her to address this serious issue.”

“Threats of mass violence not only terrorize the targets of those threats, but also spread fear throughout the community at large,” Assemblywoman Buttenschon said. “This legislation will give law enforcement the tools they need to hold these perpetrators accountable for their actions and help keep our families safe. I want to thank Sen. Griffo for working with me on this critical piece of bipartisan legislation.”