



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Fred Akshar

Senate Republicans: Protect Those Who Protect Us

FRED AKSHAR May 11, 2021

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Senator Fred Akshar and members of the Senate Republican Conference today unveiled a package to protect and honor the brave members of law enforcement all across New York, and safeguard law-abiding New Yorkers against the disastrous results of One-Party Rule's criminal justice "reforms."

"Supporting our police and working to make life safer for all members of our community are not mutually exclusive concepts. We must be willing to work together to build better

relationships between men and women of law enforcement and the communities they are sworn to protect. Targeting police and compromising public safety with half-baked legislation only undermines those efforts. The only way forward is by our communities working together on solutions that result in safer communities, not more unintended and dangerous consequences,” said Senator Fred Akshar.

“Since 2019, it’s been clear to most New Yorkers that the scales of justice in our state have tipped heavily in favor of violent criminals -- and at the expense of our courageous law enforcement, as well as the men and women they are sworn to protect and serve. Bail reform has been a disaster. Our police are under constant attack. Murders and other violent crimes in many of our big cities have gone through the roof. It is time to halt this madness and get back to the basics of public safety, and that begins with protecting those who protect us. I’m proud to stand beside my colleagues in support of the first of our initiatives to restore common-sense and public safety in New York,” said Senate Minority Leader Robert Ort.

“Law enforcement officers face enormous challenges while on the job and recent attacks on their profession have made their work even more dangerous. Too often police officers come under attack simply because they wear a badge and a uniform. Such disregard for law enforcement shows disregard for the rule of law necessary in a civilized society. We need to do more to support and protect the men and women who have dedicated their lives to keeping our fellow citizens safe. This legislation will help to do that. As a former Trooper and Sheriff of Erie County, I know the vast majority of officers care about the communities they serve and the rights of all law abiding citizens. They deserve our support and our appreciation, today and every day,” said Senator Patrick M. Gallivan.

“New Yorkers emerging from the COVID pandemic are now faced with a new

challenge—that of soaring crime rates and a state that is less safe than when the pandemic began. Albany’s pro-crime agenda has weakened public safety and made the job of law enforcement more difficult and dangerous. Enough is enough. We must end reckless policies like cashless bail and adopt new measures to protect and support the men and women who put their lives on the line every day to keep our communities safe,” said Senator Anthony Palumbo.

“As the mother and wife of police officers, I know firsthand the sacrifices the men and women of law enforcement make day in and day out. I am proud to stand with my colleagues advancing this pro-police package of bills in support of National Police Week,” said Senator Alexis Weik.

“Whether it’s disturbing increases in felony assaults, robberies, and shootings, or 70 percent of New Yorkers being rightly concerned about their safety, the verdict is in concerning the Senate Democratic Majority’s so-called criminal justice reforms: guilty! Their policies are guilty of recklessly endangering the lives of New Yorkers and making our state less safe. One-Party Rule and the Senate Democrats’ ‘no criminal left behind’ agenda is dangerous, irresponsible, and foolishly undone decades of real progress in reducing violent crime, especially in New York City that’s been engulfed in a wave of violence. Instead of promoting criminal-coddling policies, as well as disrespecting and defunding our police, Democrats should follow our lead and stand with law enforcement. To every police officer across our state, the Senate Republican Conference has your back, during National Police Week, and every week, as evidenced by our ‘Protect Those Who Protect Us’ agenda. We appreciate, respect, and support the brave men and women of law enforcement who protect and serve all New Yorkers,” said Senator Daphne Jordan.

“It is nearly impossible to overstate the critical importance of strong public support for law enforcement and how public trust helps us do our job of serving and protecting all New Yorkers. Law enforcement is difficult, demanding, often dangerous work. I can say for a fact that the men and women who wear the uniform do so proudly, believe deeply in public safety, and recognize the importance of public service and making our state safer and more secure for everyone. The appreciation and thanks we receive, and recognition of the importance of respect for the law and those who help preserve public safety, makes all the difference to our profession. I appreciate Senator Jordan, and the Senate Republican Conference’s continued efforts in advancing common-sense legislation to protect the safety of law enforcement members, enhance the public safety of all New Yorkers, and roll-back the disastrous bail 'reform' law that has been an abysmal failure,” said David Bartlett, Columbia County Sheriff and President of the New York State Sheriffs’ Association.

Keynotes of the legislative package to “Protect Those Who Protect Us” in New York include:

[S2561 \(Jordan\)](#), which would strengthen the penalties for assaulting a police officer.

[S3208 \(Ortt\)](#), which would strengthen penalties for causing a police officer to come into contact with foreign substances or objects, such as bottles, flammable liquids, etc.

[S3463 \(Gallivan\)](#), which would make it a crime to dox a police or peace officer simply because of their profession and with the intent to threaten or intimidate that police or peace officer.

[S3465 \(Gallivan\)](#), which would make it a crime to falsely accuse a police or peace officer of wrongdoing in the performance of their duties. This is necessary because of the repeal of

Section 50-A, and would protect law enforcement against unfounded or unsubstantiated claims.

A proposal by Senator Alexis Weik to Defund Municipalities that Defund the Police Act. The Director of the Division of Budget would withhold state funding to a municipality that abolishes, disbands or significantly reduces its police department. The amount of state money withheld would correspond with the percentage reduction in a police department's budget by the municipality.

In New York City, violent crime has risen at an alarming rate over the past year, with the most recent report by the NYPD showing that overall index crime rose by 30.4 percent compared to April 2020. This rapid increase in crime was driven in part by a 35.6 percent increase in felony assault, a 28.6 percent increase in robbery, and a 166.1 percent increase in shooting incidents.

According to a recent State of Safety in America report by Safewise, New York is the “most worried about safety” state in the nation, with 70 percent of New Yorkers reporting that they are “concerned daily” about their safety. In addition, only 40 percent of New Yorkers feel safe in their everyday lives, while 78 percent think crime is increasing.

These alarming statistics follow the implementation of Democrat bail reform and discovery reform since 2019, as well as the disbanding of the NYPD's “anti-crime” unit and \$1 billion cut to New York City police funding.

Today's legislative package also includes:

S1917 (Akshar) – Hate Crime against a Police Officer – Makes a crime committed against a police officer because of their status as a police officer, a hate crime.

S2034 (Akshar) – Disability and Death Benefit – Provides a \$500,000 benefit for police officers who are seriously disabled or die from injuries incurred in the line of duty.

S2226 (Helming) – Stalking a Police/Peace Officer – Makes it a class E Felony to stalk a police or peace officer, and makes the crime of stalking a police or peace officer eligible for bail.

S3464 (Gallivan) – Failure to Retreat – Makes it a class D Felony for any person to approach or remain within 25 feet of a police officer engaged in the performance of their duties when they are ordered by an officer and they fail to do so.

S6231 (Lanza) – Resisting Arrest - Enhances the penalty resisting arrest from a class A misdemeanor to a class E Felony. Adds resisting arrest to the list of E Felonies where a police officer may arrest someone, instead of being required to issue an appearance ticket.

S6285 (Serino) – Police Memorial Day - Establishes May 15th as Police Memorial Day in New York State. Requires the Governor to appear in person at the fitting ceremony at the Police

Memorial Wall and to read, out loud, the names of the police officers who died during the previous year from injuries incurred in the line of duty.

S6286 (Serino) – Unfounded and unsubstantiated complaints against first responders; This is necessary because of the repeal of Section 50-A, and would prohibit the disclosure of personnel records with regard to unsubstantiated or unfounded complaints made against first responders.

“Never before has it been more dangerous to be a police officer in New York State. The reprehensible behavior of a few bad actors has been magnified and exploited by radical activists to paint a false narrative that bias and mistreatment of suspects are rampant in our law enforcement community. That notion has not only spurred a hateful, anti-police sentiment, but it has been used to justify harmful measures such as bail reform and the repeal of Section 50-A, which have only heightened the risks to our courageous police officers. The package we are advancing today is a step towards restoring some common sense and sanity to this area of policy, by providing needed protections for those who are on the front lines of public safety,” said Senator George Borrello.

“Today we show the women and men serving in law enforcement that we appreciate them and their contribution to public safety and our community. We should be proud of our Police Officers and respect their dedication. Our Law Enforcement Officers face danger almost every day, yet they show up to serve and protect our neighborhoods and families,” said Senator Phil Boyle.

"I appreciate the men and women of law enforcement and their dedication and commitment to serve and protect our communities. I thank our police and law enforcement personnel for their selfless service and the sacrifices that they make on the behalf of all New Yorkers," said Senator Joseph Griffo.

"Our law enforcement officers put their lives on the line for us every time they leave their homes for work. We are recognizing that sacrifice during National Police Week. We must never forget the challenges these officers face and the heroism they demonstrate. The men and women of law enforcement are hardworking and dedicated public servants. As State Senator, I am grateful for their service and I will continue to be a strong advocate for our officers and their families," said Senator Pam Helming.

"The so called criminal justice reforms have made our neighborhoods less safe and this package of common sense public safety bills will allow law enforcement to protect our families and support the difficult job they do everyday," said Deputy Minority Leader Andrew Lanza.

"The difference between this conference and the Governor and his allies in the majority is we stand for the rule of law, and they stand for coddling criminals. The bills you support demonstrate your priorities and this package clearly shows that I'm 100 percent behind law enforcement," said Senator Mike Martucci.

"As our nation says thank you to our law enforcement community during National Police Week, it is important that our men and women in blue know that New York State stands

with them. Throughout the past year, our police officers have been attacked for simply doing their jobs and that is simply wrong. The 'Protect Those Who Protect Us' package will show these selfless public servants that New York State has their backs," said Senator Mario R. Mattera.

"Our law enforcement officers are dedicated, hardworking men and women, they take their oath to protect and serve to heart and are vital to ensuring safety in our communities. In recent years we have witnessed an alarming increase in violent crime that, not coincidentally, runs parallel with bad policies emanating from Albany. We need to tilt the scales of justice away from criminals and back toward the law abiding – we can start by standing up for our police," said Senator Peter Oberacker.

"We cannot sit back and simply accept and tolerate the ongoing attacks on the men and women in law enforcement serving to protect our communities and neighborhoods. They are risking their lives every day and every night, in an increasingly hostile environment throughout this state, to do their best to keep us safe from violent criminals who have no respect whatsoever for the law or for other lives. We have to take these steps to let our police officers know that we stand with them and that we have their backs, as well as to ensure that we are doing everything possible to prevent a complete breakdown of our society. There can be no tolerance for attacks on the law enforcement officers who are fundamental to public safety and security," said Senator Tom O'Mara.

"Our law enforcement risk their lives for our safety and the safety of our communities, every day. We should be working to increase their protection, not diminish it. Unfortunately, there

have been numerous examples of legislation that prioritizes criminals and hurts our law enforcement. It is imperative that we work to change this and we work to protect our law enforcement,” said Senator Ed Rath.

“Every day, without hesitation, members of law enforcement put their own lives on the line to protect the safety of others. In today’s world, the job they do is increasingly difficult. Just as they have a duty to protect and serve, we have a duty to support them and the critical work they do. While reforms in recent years have tipped the scales of justice toward those who choose to do wrong, this package of legislation is a step back toward a safer New York State not only for members of law enforcement, but for all residents,” said Senator Patty Ritchie.

“As we look to rebuild our state in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have to start by ensuring public safety across the board. That means reversing any policies that threaten to erode it, putting an end to the divisiveness, and bringing New Yorkers together to support those who work tirelessly to protect our communities. For too long now, Albany has put criminals ahead of law-abiding citizens and the real human consequences of those dangerous policy changes cannot be ignored. It is time now for Albany to reset its priorities, hold criminals accountable and protect those who selflessly sign up to serve and protect all of us,” said Senator Sue Serino.

“Just days ago we learned that a 4-year-old girl was shot while shopping with her family in Times Square. Mayor de Blasio’s response was a promise for more police. While more police can help, what’s really needed is more support for the dedicated men and women who put

everything on the line to protect us. The reforms pushed by far-left Democrats and Governor Cuomo, including the so-called bail reform law, have emboldened criminals. They've made the job of policing much more difficult. The reality, as we know, is that New York State is growing less and less safe. To change that lawmakers need to stand with law enforcement and stand up for law-abiding New Yorkers," said Senator Dan Stec.

"As we commemorate National Police Week, I'm proud to be a strong voice for public safety and stand up and support the heroic men and women of law enforcement. Can you imagine a job where every day before you go to work you have to put on body armor? Our police put their lives on the line each and every day to protect us and keep our communities safe. We thank the members of our Thin Blue Line for what they do, especially in this difficult time, as they have become targeted for acts of violence. I will always support law enforcement and oppose any effort to defund our police," said Senator Jim Tedisco.