



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Fred Akshar

Senators Mike Martucci and Fred Akshar Join Firefighters to Rally for Billy's Law

FRED AKSHAR February 11, 2022

| ISSUE: **BILLY'S LAW, REPEAL BAIL REFORM, CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM, FIREFIGHTERS, PUBLIC SAFETY**



(FENTON, NY) New York State Senators Fred Akshar (R,C - Southern Tier) and Mike Martucci (R,C-Hudson Valley/Catskills) joined local firefighters at the Hillcrest Fire Company to rally for the passage of legislation to authorize bail and pre-trial detention for all felony arson charges.

The rally comes in the wake of Assistant Chief Billy Steinberg of the Forestburgh Fire

Company's death in the line of duty on January 15th. Steinbeg perished responding to a structure fire that was intentionally set by a serial felon arsonist. For previous suspected felony arson charges, the individual was arrested and released on his own recognizance in accordance with the state's bail reform law. The release occurred just one day prior to the fatal fire, on January 14th. The legislation ([S.8181](#)), introduced by Senator Martucci and cosponsored by Senator Fred Akshar, is being dubbed "Billy's Law," in Steinberg's memory.

"Since I introduced 'Billy's Law' one week ago, we have received a tremendous outpouring of support from all across the State. Community and municipal leaders, a bipartisan coalition of elected officials, and most importantly, the public have answered our call to action and joined the effort to get justice for Assistant Chief Billy Steinberg," said **Senator Mike Martucci**. "Bail reform is the worst piece of public policy we've seen in recent memory. Its stark failures must be addressed before another innocent life is lost, and that starts with protecting our firefighters through 'Billy's Law.'"

"New York's failed leadership stands alone in its unique culpability to the violence and death their failed policies have wrought," said **Senator Fred Akshar**. For three years our leaders in Albany have stood idly by while innocent people suffer, all to appease their donors and interest groups. New York's brave first responders, our families and even the New York City Mayor himself are all calling on Albany to fix this broken law, stop coddling violent criminals and restore public safety. Today we raise our collective voices in Assistant Chief Steinberg's memory to help ensure this never happens again."

The idea for the legislation hatched from a conversation between Senator Martucci and Billy's father Jim Steinberg, an ex-chief of the Forestburgh Fire Company and a sitting fire commissioner, who contacted the senator for help. Its aim is to help protect volunteer firefighters by addressing a hole in the bail elimination act of 2019 which prevents law

enforcement from keeping felony arson third- and fourth-degree suspects in custody.

“My family and I are incredibly touched by the overwhelming support for ‘Billy’s Law.’ Today’s rally – a hundred miles from our home – demonstrates that Billy’s life of service is still on an important mission,” said **Jim Steinberg**. “The system has failed us and every firefighter who answers the alarm. Please hear our heartfelt pleas to change this law so another family never has to endure this type of tragedy.”

During the rally, Senators Akshar and Martucci were flanked by members of Billy Steinberg’s family – including his father Jim and his son Kyle, a 5th generation firefighter, Assemblyman Joe Angelino, Broome County Emergency Services Fire Coordinator and Harpursville Fire Chief Jeff Buckler, Binghamton Police Chief Joe Zikuski and volunteer firefighters from throughout Broome County.

"I'm here today to honor Assistant Chief Billy Steinberg's selfless service to his community and to offer sincere condolences to his family and firefighters left behind. It is apparent down-state liberals have a tolerance for criminals that are not shared in the least bit by the people I represent in the 122nd Assembly District. This liberal experiment in leniency toward criminals has proven a failure and now is the time to turn this around so crime victims are at the forefront of the laws of New York State. I'm proud to support the passage of Billy's Law to protect our first responders and all citizens of New York State" - **Assemblyman Joe Angelino, a former Police Chief, and Fire Chief**

“I’m grateful for my friend and colleague Senator Akshar and the selfless men and women of the Hillcrest Fire Department for hosting us here in Broome County today. Our communities are united behind this crucial cause,” concluded **Senator Martucci**.

Senators Martucci and Akshar have consistently been outspoken critics of New York State's bail reform since it was first enacted. They are encouraging everyone to [sign the petition](#) in support of passing Billy's Law.

RELATED LEGISLATION

2021-S8118

- Introduced

- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate

- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate

- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

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[Relates to requiring the state's model law enforcement use of force policy to conform to standards promulgated by the United Nations](#)

January 25, 2022

In Senate Committee [Codes](#)

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Do you support this bill?