



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mario R. Mattera

## New York State Senators Join With First Responders To Support "Billy's Law"

MARIO R. MATTERA March 16, 2022

| ISSUE: **BILLY'S LAW**, **VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS**, **BRENTWOOD FIRE DEPARTMENT**, **CASHLESS BAIL**, **ARSON**



Senator Mario R. Mattera (2nd Senate District) , along with his Long Island’s State Senate Republican colleagues **Phil Boyle** (4th Senate District), **Alexis Weik** (3rd Senate District) and **Anthony Palumbo** (1st Senate District) joined with **Senator Mike Martucci** (42nd Senate District) at the Brentwood Fire Department to advocate for “Billy’s Law”, which is sponsored by Senator Martucci, that would authorize bail and pre-trial detention for all arson felonies, allowing law enforcement to keep those criminals off New York streets.

“Robberies, assaults and now arson—the long list of violent crimes resulting from Albany’s failed ‘bail reforms’ continues to grow. But it shouldn’t have to take the death of a hero volunteer firefighter like Billy Steinberg to recognize that weakening our laws emboldens criminals and makes our communities less safe. We need to repeal cashless bail, give judges more discretion to detain dangerous criminals, support police and once again make public safety a priority in our state,” **said Senator Weik.**

As a volunteer firefighter of 25 years, I understand the vital necessity of passing “Billy’s Law”. We must act to protect not only New York’s firefighters but all of our residents who may be harmed when arsonists are released without bail”, **said Senator Boyle.**

“A selfless hero to his community, Assistant Chief Steinberg is a victim of our state’s ill-conceived cashless bail system and his loss should make it clear that the bail reform policy is failing our residents. We need to take immediate steps to re-evaluate this law and include our first responders, our prosecutors, our judges and our residents in a much-needed discussion of how to best protect our law-abiding New Yorkers. Billy’s story is a tragedy that should have and could have been averted and it is New York State’s responsibility to make the changes we need before we lose one more innocent resident,” **stated Senator Mattera.**

“The unintended consequences of no cash bail have wreaked havoc throughout our communities and has made the state less safe for residents and first responders. I am proud to stand with my colleagues, Billy’s family and all our men and women in uniform to get this legislation passed and make New York State safer for our first responders, firefighters and the men and women of law enforcement,” **said Palumbo.**

“Assistant Chief Billy Steinberg’s death was completely preventable. Due to the repeat criminal actions of a serial arsonist, and who is now also an indicted murderer, a local hero’s life was cut tragically short. Bail reform is a catastrophic failure, and every day, more and

more elected officials are seeing the light and joining us and the public in calling for change. Before one more innocent life is lost, action must be taken. Billy's Law is a practical step to address the dangerousness of repeat offenders and protect our firefighters that has broad, bipartisan support," **added Senator Martucci.**

On Saturday, January 15, 2022, William "Billy" Steinberg, 37, assistant chief with the Forestburgh Fire Company, responded to a fire in an empty vacation home in Sullivan County. He never made it home that night as he collapsed and died of a heart attack on the scene of the fire.

Police have charged a man with setting that fire, the same man who was charged just one day before, with setting fires on January 10 and January 13, 2022. However, due to New York's current bail reform law, this serial arsonist was not held in lieu of bail for the earlier fires -- he was set free on January 14 2022. Authorities say the very next day, January 15, he set the blaze that took Billy Steinberg's life.

The offender has since been indicted on a felony murder charge for this incident.

"If bail reform had not been in place, this repeat arsonist and murderer would have been detained the first time he recklessly set a fire. His release from custody is the only reason he was free and able to set the fire that claimed Billy's life. The evidence is clear -- the system has utterly failed us. My family and I are making a direct plea to the state Legislature to fix bail reform so another family never has to endure this type of tragedy," **said Jim Steinberg, Assistant Chief Steinberg's father.**

The Senators were joined by both fire and law enforcement officials who applauded the efforts to protect our men and women in uniform as well as the general public from dangerous criminals.

“There are countless reasons why the disastrous ‘bail reform’ measure passed in Albany must be repealed. Arson is a serious, life-threatening crime, and arsonists must be held responsible for their actions, to the fullest extent of the law. Firefighters and law enforcement share a sacred bond, both swearing an oath to preserve and protect New Yorkers. The loss of any member of the Uniformed Services from the actions of a criminal is tragic, and ‘Billy’s Law’ would help hold criminals responsible for their actions. The State Senate and Assembly must pass this action in the name of safety for all New Yorkers, and those who wear a uniform.” – **Noel DiGerolamo, President, Suffolk County PBA.**

Senator Martucci's Billy's Law legislation ([S8181](#)) is currently in the Senate Codes Committee.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### 2021-S8181

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- 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 authorizing bail and pre-trial detention for arson felonies

January 31, 2022

In Senate Committee **Finance**

Sponsored by **Mike Martucci**

Do you support this bill?