



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Anthony H. Palumbo

## Palumbo: Make Public Safety A Priority in this Year's State Budget

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| ISSUE: **BAIL REFORM CRIMINAL JUSTICE**



This week I joined with my colleagues from the Senate and Assembly Republican Conferences, District Attorneys, and law enforcement officials to call on Governor Kathy Hochul and legislative leaders to reverse failed criminal justice policies and strengthen public protection in the 2022-23 State Budget.

In 2019, Democrats in Albany drastically overhauled New York's criminal justice system. Those changes greatly diminished the public's safety and enabled career criminals to enjoy wide latitude to operate in New York. As such, my colleagues and I are calling for a

substantial rollback of those policies, including increased judicial discretion in setting bail and changes to parole procedures.

Bail reform has been a complete and utter failure – one that has made our communities less safe and the job of law enforcement more dangerous. When the law took effect in January 2020 the impact on our communities was immediate and obvious. Only three months later, the Democrat Majorities made changes that they heralded as significant and meaningful. However, as we have seen from the increase in crime throughout the state, their “corrective measures” missed the mark.

Now, in an election year, Governor Hochul is reluctantly offering more changes to the law due to the fallout from this disastrous policy. Sadly, none of these “fixes” were in her budget proposal or in her 30-day amendments to her proposed budget. Only when the polls began to reflect negatively did the Governor offer her incomplete and lackluster changes.

Bail and discovery reforms have been so detrimental to our criminal justice system that piecemeal changes will do little to change the trajectory of New York’s new crime wave.

Instead, we need a complete overhaul of the criminal justice system that starts with the full repeal of no cash bail and the discovery law. The next step would be to pass, incrementally, a series of initiatives to bolster law enforcement’s ability to protect our communities, keep criminals off our streets, support crime victims and their families and strengthen the state’s criminal justice system.

These proposals include:

- **Protecting Those Who Protect Us:**
  - Invest in law enforcement;

- Provide them with the support they need to make our communities safe and serve those in need; and
- Fight efforts to demonize and “Defund the Police.”

- **Rejecting Dangerous “Reforms” like Cashless Bail:**

- End cashless bail, restore judicial discretion and reject dangerous proposals to erase entire criminal databases;
- Require state agencies to be transparent about the effects of public safety policies; and
- Fix unworkable discovery and “speedy trial” laws that have turned our justice system into a revolving door for repeat and violent offenders.

- **Reforming the Broken Parole System:**

- Re-center the parole process around the protection and rights of crime victims and their families;
- Ensure that cop-killers, serial killers, child killers, and other dangerous murderers can NEVER be released; and
- Reject dangerous proposals to weaken the parole system.

- **Passing a Victims' Justice Agenda:**

- Strengthen penalties for violent and repeat offenders, as well as hate crimes;
- Invest in proven mental health, addiction, homeless, and victims' programs and services; and
- Make Kendra's Law permanent, to ensure that those struggling with mental illness get the help they need.

Good government involves ALL of the stakeholders providing input. To date, district attorneys and law enforcement officials have not been included in the conversation. The balance needed to promote justice for not only defendants, but for victims and police is a difficult task. If my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are truly interested in creating a more fair and equitable justice system that keeps New Yorkers safe, then they need to work with everyone to enact real solutions.

These new measures and others must be included in this year's budget or at the very least enacted before the conclusion of this year's Legislative Session in order to restore common sense to our public protection policies and make New York State a safer place for all residents.

There is no issue more pressing than restoring public safety in New York and I implore my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to act immediately.

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