



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo: State should consider providing protection to qualified gubernatorial candidates

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO July 26, 2022

| ISSUE: **ELECTIONS; GOVERNOR; CAMPAIGNS; VIOLENCE**

Following a recent attack on Congressman Lee Zeldin at a campaign event, New York State Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-I-C-Rome, is urging the state to consider providing security to gubernatorial candidates of state-recognized political parties who have qualified for their respective party nomination.

“In light of the events of last week, where Congressman Lee Zeldin, the Republican and Conservative Party nominee for governor, was attacked at a campaign event, I am requesting that you consider authorizing the New York State Police to offer similar protections to major gubernatorial candidates,” **Sen. Griffo wrote in a letter to Gov. Kathy Hochul.** “The state could establish a set of criteria to determine whether any candidate for governor may qualify for State Police protection, including a determination being made by the superintendent of the State Police in consultation with all four leaders of the Legislature, as occurs with respect to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security secretary.”

The full text of Sen. Griffo’s letter to the governor is below:

Hon. Kathy Hochul

Governor of New York State

NYS Capitol Building

Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul,

Within 120 days of a general presidential election, major presidential and vice presidential candidates, defined as “those individuals identified as such by the Secretary of Homeland Security after consultation with an advisory committee consisting of the speaker of the House of Representatives, the minority leader of the House of Representatives, the majority and minority leaders of the Senate, and one additional member selected by the other members of the committee,” receive Secret Service protection. In light of the events of last week, where Congressman Lee Zeldin, the Republican and Conservative Party nominee for governor, was attacked at a campaign event, I am requesting that you consider authorizing the New York State Police to offer similar protections to major gubernatorial candidates.

The state could establish a set of criteria to determine whether any candidate for governor may qualify for State Police protection, including a determination being made by the superintendent of the State Police in consultation with all four leaders of the Legislature, as occurs with respect to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security secretary. The criteria for protection could consist of the following:

- The individual should be a candidate who has secured ballot access for a political party as defined in §1-104 of the Election Law;
- Be a candidate who has raised at least \$5 million for this election cycle; and
- Have a level of prominence indicated by polls.

As you are aware, the governor is typically granted a protective detail to keep them safe from harm, which is understandable and warranted. Unfortunately, the current temperature of

our politics necessitates the extension of those protections to major gubernatorial candidates as well. We have experienced some serious recent attempts at political violence, which should give all of us pause. We should not take for granted the true intent of those who attempted violence against elected officials and candidates; we should instead take those incidents as an opportunity to act and provide these people with the protection they deserve so that voters can decide the fate of a particular candidate, not the violent acts of one person.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Griffo

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