



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George M. Borrello

Senator Borrello and Assemblyman Goodell Urge Passage of Measure to Strengthen Chautauqua Institution Security

GEORGE M. BORRELLO August 16, 2022

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JAMESTOWN, NY – Senator George Borrello and Assemblyman Andy Goodell are advocating for Governor Hochul to convene a special session to pass **legislation** they sponsor that would strengthen security at Chautauqua Institution by granting ‘peace officer’ status to the organization’s public safety personnel.

They sent a letter (attached) to the Governor on Monday outlining the need for the legislation and requesting a return to session to pass the bill.

Their advocacy comes in the wake of last week's horrific attack on author Salman Rushdie at the celebrated educational and cultural venue. With organization leadership and state and local officials reviewing security protocols and proposals for enhancements, there is a renewed focus on the need to enact the measure.

"The brutal and unprovoked attack on Mr. Rushdie has been a devastating reminder that violence and evil have no boundaries. Even the most idyllic and peaceful places are not immune from the harm that can be inflicted by a very determined and dangerous individual," said Senator Borrello. "While Chautauqua Institution remains a place where people can and should feel safe, this incident underscores the importance of providing the venue with an added layer of protection."

"In her remarks at Chautauqua Institution on Sunday, the Governor indicated she would sign this legislation if it comes to her desk. Recalling the legislature and working for passage of our bill is the first step towards making that happen."

Senate bill 421/Assembly bill 5038 would designate the public safety personnel at Chautauqua Institution as "peace officers," a status that confers many of the same powers as police officers. This would enable the Chautauqua Institution safety personnel to make arrests, use physical force if necessary, and issue appearance tickets and traffic tickets. Currently, the Chautauqua Institution safety personnel must call for assistance from the Sheriff's Department or the State Police to make these arrests, which is an inefficient and cumbersome process.

“As trained and licensed security officers, Chautauqua Institution’s public safety personnel already carry weapons and have done so for decades,” said Senator Borrello. “This designation would give them the necessary means to respond to immediate threats and emergencies with full authority. Under their current constraints, it is difficult for them to function effectively and provide the fullest measure of protection to the artists, audiences and residents that enjoy this wonderful venue.”

“This legislation previously passed the State Legislature, only to be vetoed by Governor Cuomo. Unfortunately, the recent attack at Chautauqua Institution highlighted the need and justification for this legislation. I appreciate the fact that Governor Hochul expressed her condolences over this attack. Now we need her support to help address this issue in a thoughtful and meaningful manner by supporting this legislation,” said Assemblyman Goodell.

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