



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Tedisco

## Senator Tedisco, Senator Walczyk, Senator Murray, Sheriff Zurlo & Ballston Spa Mayor Rossi: Pass Anti-Swatting Bill to End “Terror Calls” on Our Schools

JAMES TEDISCO April 5, 2023

| ISSUE: **SCHOOL SAFETY, SWATTING, DOMESTIC TERRORISM**

In response to a rash of terrifying false reports of active shooter incidents at schools across New York State, including the Ballston Spa School District yesterday, that have led to a heavy police response and tremendous fear and anxiety among students, staff and families, Senator Jim Tedisco, Senator Mark Walczyk, Senator Dean Murray, Saratoga County Sheriff Michael Zurlo and Ballston Spa Mayor Frank Rossi, Jr. today are urging passage of legislation to make the act of “swatting” a Class E Felony.

“Swatting” references an attempt to make a false report of potential violence to bring about a large dispatch of heavily armed law enforcement to a predetermined address or location.

The legislation, [S.4283](#), sponsored by Senator Walczyk, Senator Tedisco and Senator Murray, raises the penalty for Swatting from a current Class A. misdemeanor (up to 1 year in jail) to a Class E felony (1.5 to 4 years in state prison).

“With these terror calls, it’s becoming open season on spreading fear, stress, anxiety, and depression throughout our vulnerable student bodies as well as staff and their families. These contacts threatening violence in our schools is another form of terrorism which cannot be allowed to stand,” said Senator Jim Tedisco (R,C-44<sup>th</sup> Senate District).

“Heightened penalties on these egregious acts will open up tools for law enforcement to gather and prosecute the bad actors. I look forward to working with the Governor and partners in the Senate and the Assembly to finally get this bill done,” said Senator Mark Walczyk (R,C-49<sup>th</sup> Senate District).

“There have been over 50 cases of ‘Swatting,’ (false reports of shooting incidents that result in SWAT teams being deployed) at school districts all across the state, including districts on Long Island. Let me be clear, ‘Swatting’ is not funny and it’s not cool... but it is dangerous and illegal. That is why I’m proud to team with my colleagues, Senators Walczyk and Tedisco, to introduce legislation to give police the tools they need to crack down on this irresponsible and dangerous trend,” said NYS Senator Dean Murray, 3rd District.

“The act of making false reports of active shooter situations at our schools is creating anxiety for students, staff and families and requiring law enforcement to divert their attention to these situations. It’s dangerous and unacceptable and cannot be allowed to continue with a simple slap on the wrist penalty. I support Senator Tedisco and Senator Walczyk’s legislation to raise criminal penalties for this serious crime to a felony,” said Saratoga County Sheriff Michael Zurlo.

“I fully support Senators Tedisco and Walczyk’s efforts surrounding Senate Bill S4283. In just one year as Mayor of the Village of Ballston Spa, I have watched our Central School District, Village Police, Sheriff’s Department, and State Police have to address too many non-credible threats because those creating those threats think there’s no meaningful penalty to doing so. This needs to change because the costs of these threats include the detrimental effects to the mental health and education of our local students and can greatly compromise the resources of our community,” said Ballston Spa Mayor Frank Rossi, Jr.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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## 2023-S4283

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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
  -

Relates to falsely reporting incidents in an attempt to bring about the dispatch of a large number of police officers to a particular address or location

February 07, 2023

In Senate Committee [Codes](#)

Sponsored by [Mark Walczyk](#)

Do you support this bill?