NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John W. Mannion

Senator John W. Mannion Announces Legislation Elevating School 'Swatting' to Class D Felony

JOHN W. MANNION April 17, 2023

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SYRACUSE, NY – Senator John W. Mannion today announced new legislation to combat false reports of active shooters in schools that are known as 'swatting' due to the significant law enforcement response to these incidents.

Senator Mannion's bill (S6296) elevates reporting a false school shooting or violent incident on school grounds to a Class D felony and increases the penalties for anyone convicted of 'swatting' a school to up to seven years.

Senator Mannion made the announcement at Westhill High school, joined by Onondaga County Sheriff Toby Shelley, Geddes Police Chief John Fall, and Westhill Superintendent Steve Dunham. Westhill High School is one of many schools in New York that recently experienced a false report of an active school shooter and the associated police response.

Senator John W. Mannion said, "This legislation is about deterrence and sending a message – do not report a false shooting and terrorize and disrupt our communities. My bill strengthens state law and makes clear that anyone convicted of 'swatting' a school faces serious prison time."

Onondaga County Sheriff Toby Shelley said, "Thank you, Senator Mannion for inviting me to attend today. I support your new legislation, swatting is not a victimless crime. Perpetrators will be pursued and prosecuted pursuant to the law."

Westhill School District Superintendent Steve Dunham said, "The recent 'swatting' of Westhill High School was scary and infuriating. I am grateful that Senator Mannion - a longtime educator who intricately understands classroom safety and the impacts of 'swatting' on a school community – is stepping forward with legislation to deter this from happening again. Students should never be scared to come to school and turning our schools into fortresses is not the answer. In addition to Senator Mannion's legislation, I support enforcing stricter gun laws, and making mental health as much a priority as physical health."

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