



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeremy Cooney

## NYS Senator Cooney Co-Sponsors Legislation to Combat Swatting

JEREMY COONEY April 18, 2023

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**(ROCHESTER, NY)** - Today, **Senator Jeremy Cooney (D-Rochester)**, signed on to [new legislation](#) that would increase legal penalties for those who falsely report incidents involving the use of a deadly weapon or dangerous instrument.

Over the past two months, over 50 school districts across New York State have received correspondence falsely reporting violence on campus, ranging from reports of individuals armed with firearms, to bomb threats. Multiple districts in Monroe County were targeted by these attacks, including Brighton, Brockport and Spencerport.

False incident reports, or “Swatting” schemes are often made with the intention of causing the deployment of police Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams to provoke a further incident with a specific individual or group. SWAT teams have responded to numerous false reports of emergency situations across the country in which the possibility of a serious threat has resulted in innocent persons being injured or killed.

Senate Bill [S.6296](#) would expand criminal penalties for a person that conveys a false or baseless report to include the false reporting of the use of a deadly weapon or dangerous instrument. The bill is sponsored by Senator John Mannion, who represents Central New York.

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There is no greater responsibility of government than protecting our children,” said **Senator Jeremy Cooney**. “I am proud to sign onto legislation that quickly addresses a threat that is currently on the rise statewide, and afflicting schools in our Greater Rochester community. We must send a strong message that threats to our students will not be tolerated, and there will be severe consequences for those who would put their physical and mental health at risk.”

“Our children are our most precious community members. By design, our schools are intended to be safe environments for learning and growing,” said **Monroe County Sheriff Todd K. Baxter**. “Any threat to disrupt or endanger our schools will not be tolerated, and my office will relentlessly pursue those responsible. I support legislation that enacts stiffer penalties for those who falsely report incidents in these safe havens, creating panic and anxiety throughout our community.”

“Swatting and all forms of threats to school pose an immediate and significant danger to children, staff, families and the community,” said **Brighton Central School District Superintendent Dr. Kevin McGowan**. “Needless activation of emergency systems put adults at risk and the emotional impact on staff, families and children most of all cannot be overstated. Trauma is caused, disruptions to learning are significant and these instances only serve to finish the safety and security that the school provides children during uncertain times. We welcome this legislation and hope that it serves as a deterrent to these harmful incidents. We’re grateful to Senator Cooney and his colleagues for their constant work on behalf of our school community.”

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