



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mark Walczyk

Senator Walczyk and Assemblyman Jensen Sponsor Bills To Enact "Garrett's Law"

MARK WALCZYK May 10, 2023

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Senator Mark Walczyk proudly joins Assemblyman Josh Jensen to introduce Garrett's Law, an important piece of legislation in honor of Sackets Harbor native, Garrett Loomis. Mr. Loomis was a dedicated public servant who joined the Sackets Harbor Fire Department at the age of 18 and pursued a career in the fire service, eventually attending the New York State Fire Academy at Montour Falls.

While volunteering for the Sackets Harbor Fire Department as an Assistant Chief, he responded to a call of a fire inside an oxygen limiting silo in his district. Upon arriving on scene, it was determined the best course of action to contain the blaze would be to close the hatch at the top of the silo to limit further oxygen from reaching the fire. Unfortunately, this had the opposite effect; the stored energy in the silo led to an explosion, ejecting him 20-30 feet from the top of the silo. Garrett Loomis died a hero on April 11, 2010. Today, the Garrett W. Loomis Foundation carries on his legacy by enhancing fire safety education regionally, providing opportunities for individuals or organizations driven to positively impact our local communities and honor Garrett's legacy in perpetuity.

The decision making of firefighters is only as good as the information they are presented with. This important bill will direct New York State to create placards containing critical information about how to deal with fires in oxygen limiting silos. The bill does not mandate that farmers obtain and display these placards, but allows for the opportunity for more awareness on dealing with emergency situations that involve these silos. The information presented on these placards, could have saved the life of Garrett Loomis. Senator Walczyk and Assemblyman Jensen believe it's imperative that the State create these placards for the existing oxygen limiting silos of the State, so this unfortunate tragedy is never repeated.

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"I'm proud to carry this important legislation in honor of an outstanding individual from the 49th Senate District," said Senator Walczyk. "We need to ensure that a tragedy such as this incident is never repeated again. Had the necessary and vital information been displayed on the burning silo, it's likely that Mr. Loomis would be continuing to selflessly serve his community to this day. Garrett is missed by so many, and it's my honor to fight for this legislation in his memory."

“It is critically important that our state takes any and all appropriate measures to ensure the safety of first responders, and that includes when battling fires at silos at New York’s farms,” said Assemblyman Josh Jensen. “With ‘Garrett’s Law,’ we can work to ensure that the line of duty death of Garrett Loomis was not in vain and that we take affirmative action to make certain the firefighters better know the risks and dangers of a burning silo. In addition, the creation of a safety silo advocacy program will further the goal that every firefighter goes home.”