



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## Getting to Work for New Yorkers

*Sen. Monica R. Martinez kicks off new legislative session with bills targeting public safety, housing, animal welfare, the MTA, and more.*

**ALBANY, N.Y.** – Jan. 8 marked the official start of New York State’s 2025 legislative session, and state Sen. Monica R. Martinez is launching the year with an ambitious agenda aimed at moving the state forward.

In just the first full week of the new year, Sen. Martinez has filed 52 bills addressing issues, including the following priorities:

### Protecting Children

- **Increasing penalties for sex trafficking and the sex trafficking of children** ([Bill S202](#)).
- **Creating the crimes of criminal trespass on school buses, school grounds, or children’s camps** ([Bill S259](#)).
- **Developing a specialized certification for school security guards** tailored to the unique needs of an educational environment, including security awareness, mediation, emergency preparedness, and student behavior dynamics ([Bill S194](#)).
- **Banning vape products designed to resemble school supplies or toys** or marketed in ways that appeal to minors ([Bill S195](#)).
- **Amending Child Protective Service rules to:**
  - **Merge duplicate reports on open, unfounded cases** and keep them open for an additional 30 days for further investigation ([Bill S201](#)).

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- **Allow the unsealing of formerly unfounded child abuse and maltreatment reports** upon a court order, currently prohibited under state law ([Bill S899](#)).

Both bills stem from the tragic 2020 death of 8-year-old Thomas Valva, who died of hypothermia after he and his brother were forced to sleep in an unheated garage on a night when temperatures dropped to 19 degrees.

### **Enhancing Public Safety**

- **Strengthening penalties for boating while intoxicated** ([Bill S200](#) and [Bill S258](#)).
- **Conducting a comprehensive study on lithium-ion battery fires**, including causes and prevention ([Bill S257](#)).
- **Tightening regulations on the sale of catalytic converters** to combat widespread thefts ([Bill S676](#)).
- **Expanding laws against the non-consensual release of intimate images and videos** to include threats of such actions ([Bill S205](#)).
- **Providing law enforcement and district attorneys discretion** to file an application for an extreme risk protection order in cases where a respondent is prohibited from possessing firearms ([Bill S260](#)).

### **Supporting First Responders, Volunteers, and Their Families**

- **Creating a property tax exemption for surviving spouses of police officers killed in the line of duty** ([Bill S683](#)).
- **Extending property tax exemptions to un-remarried spouses of volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers killed in the line of duty** ([Bill S688](#)).
- **Requiring payment of death benefits to families of volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers** within 90 days of application ([Bill S190](#)).
- **Launching a “Vets to Vollies” program** to recruit veterans and discharged military personnel into local fire departments and EMS agencies ([Bill S274](#)).

### **Advancing Housing, Economic, and Educational Opportunities**

- **Committing the state to expanding affordable, workforce, and senior housing** ([Bill S256](#)).
- **Establishing a transitional pathway program for SUNY and CUNY students with autism spectrum disorder** to improve accessibility and inclusivity in higher education ([Bill S687](#)).
- **Creating an affordable housing broadband assistance grant program** to provide discounted or free subscriptions for low-income households ([Bill S679](#)).

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## Increasing Oversight and Accountability of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)

- **Repealing the metropolitan commuter transportation mobility tax** ([Bill S203](#))
- **Appointing a fiscal monitor** to oversee MTA operation ([Bill S204](#)).
- **Holding MTA executives accountable** for service disruptions or delays across subway, bus, and commuter rail systems ([Bill S272](#)).

## Animal Welfare

- **Enacting "Tucker's Law"** to remove the existing two-year imprisonment limit for convictions of aggravated cruelty to animals ([Bill S197](#)).
- **Expanding the state's definition of wild and exotic animals** to ensure these creatures are protected from being imported, sold, or owned ([Bill S252](#)).
- **Establishing the Police Canine Vest Fund** to provide for the purchase, maintenance, repair, and replacement of soft body ballistic armor vests and other protective equipment for police canines ([Bill S189](#)).
- **Creating the Housing People and Animals Together Grant Program** to expand funding and increase access to co-sheltering resources for individuals experiencing homelessness and victims of domestic violence with companion animals ([Bill S673](#)).

Additionally, this session, Sen. Martinez has introduced legislation to safeguard democracy by requiring death certificates to be filed with local boards of elections, ensuring deceased voters are promptly removed from voter rolls ([Bill S198](#)).

“Every bill I’ve introduced is a step toward a stronger, safer, and more livable New York,” Sen. Martinez said. “Whether it’s protecting our children, supporting first responders, or holding the MTA accountable, these bold proposals address real challenges our communities face. The legislature’s time in Albany is short, and I am committed to making every day in Albany count by bringing meaningful solutions for the people of our state and the Fourth Senate District.”

This ambitious start to 2025 builds on the senator’s highly productive 2024 session, during which she introduced over 60 bills, 41 of which were passed by the Senate, with 17 currently signed into law. For a full listing of bills introduced during this first week of the new session, [click here](#).