



THE ASSEMBLY  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

**STEVE HAWLEY**  
Deputy Minority Leader  
139<sup>th</sup> District

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June 24, 2021

Hon. Rose Mary Christian, Councilwoman  
City of Batavia  
29 Williams Street  
Batavia, NY 14020

Dear Councilwoman Christian:

*Rose Mary*

Thank you for writing expressing your concerns relative the disastrous and dangerous 2019 Bail Reform. I couldn't agree with you more!!

Our Minority Conference introduced a plan that will help combat the recent rise in violent crime across the state. Major cities, like New York City, Albany, Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo have all seen a rise in crime in the first four months of 2021. New York City has seen a 17% increase in murders and an 83% increase in shootings compared to 2020. Meanwhile, homicides are up 50% in Syracuse and 100% in Rochester. In Albany, rapes, aggravated assaults and robberies have each reportedly seen a 15% increase.

The Conference attributes the state bail and discovery laws enacted in 2019 as the reason for the increase in crime, stating the laws allowed criminals to reoffend after being released when previously they would have been held in jail on bail. Our conference states that such policies were enacted without engaging important stakeholders like our law enforcement, district attorneys, judges, crime victims and their families.

Alarming, the state parole board continues to irresponsibly release dangerous individuals from prison and back into our communities, including murderers and rapists. The Conference will continue to advocate against reckless parole reform bills where criminals are being released. We are now seeing 'elder parole,' which would allow

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automatic parole hearings if an individual served 15 years of their sentence and reached age 55, regardless of the crime and sentence they received.

The following legislation is included in the initiative:

Restore Judicial Discretion (A.5265, Reilly) – Restores judicial discretion to allow judges the ability to determine whether a violent criminal poses a dangerous threat to the community and can be held without bail.

Bail for Gun Crimes (A.7066, Barclay) – Removes all gun crimes from the no-bail list of offenses Democrats established in 2019.

Parole Reform (A.5737, Hawley) – Requires a unanimous vote of at least three parole commissioners to grant a prisoner early release. Also allows a majority vote of the Legislature to remove a commissioner from the Parole Board.

Three Strikes & You're In (A.5334, Hawley) – Authorizes life in prison without parole for persistent violent felony offenders.

Shooting Into Crowds (A.4259, Hawley) – Makes it a Class B violent felony to fire into a crowded space with the intent to harm.

Additional 5 Years for Possession (A.4762, Hawley) – Provides for an additional 5-year term of imprisonment for committing a felony while possessing a loaded firearm.

Bail for Hate Crimes (A.3986, M. Miller) – Makes a “hate crime” a qualified offense for purposes of bail issuance and denying pre-trial.

With these common-sense, but important reforms, we can help to rein in the dangerous increase in violence that we are experiencing in our cities and communities across our state. We need to restore order and public safety back into our local communities to protect our families from dangerous and violent crime.

I appreciate you taking the time to contact me with your views. Please continue to do so with state-related matters of interest to you.

Sincerely,



**STEVE HAWLEY**  
Deputy Minority Leader  
Member of Assembly  
139<sup>th</sup> AD

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