



NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE

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****PRESS RELEASE****

Skoufis and Sayegh Want State Education Department to Provide Stronger Safety Standards for Schools

Senator James Skoufis (D-Orange County) and Assemblymember Nader Sayegh (D-Yonkers) have introduced legislation ([S.6291](#) / A.3728) directing the state's commissioner of education to collaborate with state police and homeland security to establish standards for the security and safety of school grounds.

In the shadow of numerous school shootings, episodes of social media-driven student violence, and recent instances of 'swatting' – false threats of violence made to illicit a response by SWAT teams – that often lead to emergency school closures, New York's schools have been left without clear or standardized guidance for how best to equip their buildings and grounds to ensure safe learning environments. This legislation would set standards for the security of doors, windows, and other points of entry, as well as access to school property such as fences and security gates; expenses related to such improvements would be exempt from a district's current tax cap.

"For too long, our school districts have been struggling to face these threats and instances of unthinkable violence without dependable, standardized criteria to address school safety," said **Senator Skoufis**. "While we all wish these tragedies weren't part of students' and educators' experiences, we can no longer stand by and allow our districts to fend for themselves. The education commissioner, along with informed input from state law enforcement, must produce standard guidance to ensure each of our schools and its leadership are well-equipped to protect our kids."

"We must leave no stone unturned in safeguarding our schools and during the years I served as a school Principal and School Board President in Yonkers, I understood the importance of setting standards and enacting plans to meet them," said **Assemblyman Sayegh**. "The tragic school shooting in Nashville, and schools across our state recently forced into lockdown following false reports of attacks, highlight the necessity for all of our schools to meet a school security and safety Standard. This will help educators and law enforcement officials to protect our students, staff, parents, and schools."

Senator Skoufis has long sought to provide Hudson Valley schools with the resources they need to keep students and staff safe, including introducing legislation to create the state's first School Resource Officer Training Program to provide responsible law enforcement supervision in our schools. Assemblymember Sayegh is a 40-year veteran of the Yonkers City School District.

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