

Tierney Joins Mattera, Senate GOP to Combat Pro-Criminal Laws

Photo courtesy of James B. Teese



(Left to right) Senator Phil Boyle, Republican Candidate for District Attorney Ray Tierney, Senator Alexis Weik, and Senator Mario Mattera.

By James B. Teese

The damage to communities was reflected in their voices and in the numbers on a large chart: Violent criminals and predators are being turned loose to create a public safety nightmare.

"The numbers don't lie -- under all-Democrat control, Long Island has become less safe," declared New York State Senate Republican Leader Ortt at a Patchogue press conference with Suffolk County District Attorney Candidate Ray Tierney and members of Long Island's Republican Senate Delegation.

"Since 2019, countless New Yorkers have been needlessly and repeatedly victimized by One-Party Rule's failed criminal justice "reforms" and rhetoric," Ortt said. "Governor Cuomo and his Democrat allies in the Legislature have made it their priority to reward violent criminals and punish our brave members of law enforcement."

Career prosecutor Tierney completely agreed: "Recent events and statistics show that violent crime has come to a community near you."

"We need to reverse the effects bail reform and onerous discovery rules are having on the criminal justice system, but we also need to do a better job prosecuting gun-related crimes. The daylight shootings that happened here in Port Jefferson in March and the triple homicide in Farmingville [on July 22] are symbolic of how crime rates have skyrocketed throughout the State and Suffolk County," he said.

"The residents of Suffolk should be worried," Tierney declared.

Senator Mario Mattera stood with Tierney.

"The continuing efforts of Democrats to put the rights of criminals ahead of our families are clearly endangering our communities," said Mattera.

"From releasing criminals to taking tools away from our police, this idealistic crusade has led to an unmistakable increase in crime and we stand together today to offer real solutions that will protect our residents and the future of our state," Mattera added.

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Offer Solutions to Combat Rising Crime and Anti-Police Policies

Restoring Public Safety

As reported during the Legislative Session by the Smithtown Messenger, Mattera and Senate Republicans have offered an alternative criminal justice agenda that is geared toward "restoring common-sense, public safety and putting law abiding citizens first in New York," as described by the Senator. This initiative includes:

- The "Protect Those Who Protect Us" package unveiled in May;
- A Parole Reform package of bills unveiled in June; and
- The "Victims' Justice Agenda" unveiled in July.

In addition to DA candidate Tierney, Leader Ortt and Senator Mattera, two more lawmakers joined the call for action: Senator Phil Boyle and Senator Alexis Weik.

They all blasted the rise in violent crime under One-Party Rule in Albany, and cited the plans to reverse the declining quality of life in communities throughout the state. In Suffolk, Tierney noted, the county has seen one of its most deadly months on record in July with nine murders, including a gang-related triple homicide, as well as a recent gang-related broad daylight murder in downtown Port Jefferson.

So-Called Reform

Just days before the press conference, Republican Leader Ortt sent a letter to the Office of Court Administration (OCA) and New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services requesting a thorough and transparent analysis of data regarding bail reform.

The timing of the recent surge in shootings and violent crime directly correlates with the passage of bail and other criminal justice "reforms" in 2019, he explained.

Since the start of 2020, shootings, murders, assaults and other violent crimes have skyrocketed all across the state. In 2020, the homicide rate rose by 55.56 percent in Nassau County and 25 percent in Suffolk County over 2019.

Law enforcement experts all across New York have almost unanimously condemned bail reform as a cause of rising violent crime. Even the NYPD Commissioner and Albany County's Democratic District Attorney have linked so-called bail reform with rising violent crime in communities all across the state.

Other "reforms" implemented in recent years include:

- The disbanding of the NYPD's "anti-crime" unit;
- A billion-dollar cut to New York City police funding, among other "defund police" actions taken throughout the state;
- "Progressive" District Attorneys refusing to prosecute quality of life offenses such as public urination;
- An overall relaxation on enforcing prostitution and street vending laws in major metro areas; and



Tierney and the Senators outside of the Sixth District Court building.

- An overall pro-criminal, anti-police climate fostered under all-Democrat rule.

As Senators praised his 26 years of experience as a career prosecutor, Tierney described how at the same time as Suffolk County's July shootings, the incumbent Suffolk DA's office had allowed over 100 criminals who were arrested -- but not indicted -- for illegal gun possession to go free. Tierney also discussed the need for leadership in the District Attorney's office to coordinate the County's anti-gang efforts.

A Recent Case

On the same day as Tierney and the Senators spoke, Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone and Suffolk's Acting Police Commissioner Stuart Cameron held a press conference to recognize First Precinct Police Officer Lucas McDonald, who was injured during the arrest of Iver Whittingham on July 27 in the Village of Babylon.

Officer McDonald was injured from a struggle that ensued when he recovered a loaded weapon from Whittingham's fanny pack, after stopping him to issue a Village of Babylon summons for allegedly urinating in public.

"Officer McDonald deserves to be honored. But that's only part of the story," said Tierney.

What the County officials failed to note was that Whittingham had been previously arrested in Suffolk County on felony firearm possession charges, which should have mandated a mandatory upstate prison sentence, Tierney explained, but which became a plea to a misdemeanor.

"This revolving door of justice caused Mr. Whittingham to be released early, whereupon he promptly obtained yet another illegal gun, thus

endangering not only Police Officer McDonald, but the residents walking on the streets of Babylon Village as well," said Tierney.

"Rather than serving upstate time, he [Whittingham] was given the opportunity to plead to a misdemeanor and he was promptly released and allowed to once again carry a gun, where, thank God, he was arrested by a Suffolk County Police Officer. It's a situation that should never happen. We need to think of both components: bail and prosecution."

Justice for Victims

The Senators and Tierney agreed that Senate Democrats so-called bail reform has been a total disaster.

"The numbers don't lie,"

said Senator Phil Boyle. "We are experiencing unprecedented increases in violent crimes throughout New York State. The Far-Left Democrats who control Albany will never admit that the cause of these increases is their so-called Bail "Reform" Laws, so Senator Ortt's call for a professional study is exactly what is needed to prove what many of us already know."

Proud wife and mother of law enforcement officers, Senator Alexis Weik agreed.

"One party control in Albany has continued to advance a pro-criminal, anti-law enforcement and anti-victim agenda, which has made our communities less safe. I am proud to stand with my Senate Republican colleagues in advancing several packages of bills that support law enforcement, reform our state's parole board, and provide justice to victims," Weik said.

Ortt summed up for the group.

"One-Party Rule has been a one-way ticket to a public safety crisis. Democrats like to say they speak for impoverished and disadvantaged communities with their policies and political positions -- but far too often, these communities are made victims by their failed "reforms" and lip service," e said.

"The results speak for themselves. It's past time for voters to send a message to politicians who would sacrifice public safety in the name of 'wokeness.'" Ortt concluded.

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