

Long Island Senate GOP Blame Crime On Democrat-Backed Reform

By LEAH CHIAPPINO · JUL 29, 2021



Ray Tierney, candidate for Suffolk County District Attorney, addresses the rise in violent crime in Suffolk County during a press conference in front of Suffolk County District Court in Patchogue on Thursday.

COURTESY OFFICE OF RAY TIERNEY

New York state Senator Alexis Wiek, a Republican from Patchogue, has a husband and son in law enforcement. She accused Democrats of handcuffing police and letting criminals walk without bail.

“Since the Democrats took over Albany, we have continued to see a pro-criminal, anti-victim and anti-law enforcement agenda and all of us are suffering because of that,” she said.

Wiek and other Long Island Republican lawmakers blame recent gun violence on criminal justice reform measures passed by Democrats. They said the state eliminating cash bail for most nonviolent crimes and police reform measures passed in 2020 have contributed to a rise in gun violence across New York.

The state recorded [93 people were shot in Suffolk County](#) that year, 30 more than the year before. Statewide, 1,427 people were shot, compared to 628 in 2019. Both Suffolk County and the state are on pace to exceed those numbers in 2021.

Earlier this month, Governor Andrew Cuomo declared a gun violence emergency to prevent illegal guns from entering the state. Other measures include providing jobs and training for at-risk youth, allowing lawsuits against gun corporations and prohibiting those with warrants from purchasing guns.

New York State Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt claimed curbing bail reform, in addition to cracking down on illegal guns, is needed to be tough on crime.

“Who are these victims?” Ortt said on Thursday alongside Republican state Senators in front of Suffolk County District Court to support Ray Tierney, a candidate for county district attorney. “Many times these victims are people of color, minority communities that are ravaged by the scourge of drug gangs ravaged by shootings and we don’t hear about the victims. We only want to talk about ethnicity based on the criminal side of things.”

Lawmakers cited three people killed in a Farmingville shooting last week, and two separate shootings in Port Jefferson earlier this year.

Senator Mario Mattera blamed the termination of “Stop and Frisk”-style policing nearly a decade ago, and other limitations on police interaction with the public, which were enacted after police murdered George Floyd last summer, for increased gun violence. He said there is room for bipartisan negotiations on reforms.

“We need to make sure that we bring sanity back,” he said “The situation has reached the point where some on the Democratic side are standing up, finally, to denounce the efforts to release the criminals and defend our police... Maybe this will lead to some collaboration on sensible reforms that will protect our residents.”

Democrats have said “tough on crime” laws pushed by Republicans give police license to disproportionately harass communities of color. Senate Democrats passed several gun safety measures this spring, including a 10-day mandatory waiting period, prohibiting the sale of illegally manufactured “ghost guns,” as well as enhanced data and research on gun violence.