

## COUNTY OF SUFFOLK

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**Media Release**  
July 31, 2015

COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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# Legislator Browning & Mayor Spery Call on New York State to Address Critical Sex Offender Laws

*Court Struck Down Local Protections Due to Weaker State Laws; Registry for Level 1 Offenders Set to Expire at Year's End*



Legislator Kate Browning, center, addresses the media in front of Rolling Hills Elementary School regarding the need for state authority to enforce local sex offender restrictions.



Mayor Maura Spery, center, calls on New York State to hold a special session in order to extend portions of Megan's Law, which are about to expire at the end of 2015.

**Huntington Station, NY** – On Thursday, July 30, 2015 Suffolk County Legislator Kate Browning (WF-Shirley) and Mastic Beach Village Mayor Maura Spery joined Executive Director Laura Ahearn of Parents for Megan's Law and elected officials to call on New York State to empower local municipalities to enforce existing sex offender restrictions that were struck down by the courts in February. The officials also urged State legislators to hold a special session in 2015 in order to extend sex offender registry requirements for Level 1 offenders that are set to expire at the need of the year if no legislative action is taken.

In February 2015 the New York State Court of Appeals struck down all County residency restriction laws, and other protections that kept the public and victims of sex crimes safer. Since current state law restricts only certain sex offenders on probation and parole from residing near schools, local laws that provided stricter regulations were ruled unenforceable. As a result, a Level 3 sex offender recently moved into a house 3 doors away from an Elementary School. This is a dangerous trend that will continue across New York State because County restrictions were struck down.

Legislator Kate Browning was the sponsor of Suffolk County's residency restrictions in 2006, a tool Suffolk County used effectively to prevent dangerous predators from living near playgrounds, schools and daycare

centers. Additional laws Legislator Browning passed to prevent sex offenders from using general population emergency shelters and/or having more than one sex offender living in a single family home while under government supervision or assistance are also affected by the court ruling.

“Nine years of successfully fighting to put in place common sense protections for our children and other vulnerable populations was wiped out by one court ruling,” stated Legislator Kate Browning. “This is an issue that has a very large impact on my legislative district, and by eliminating all of the protections I fought so hard to implement, our communities are now more vulnerable to these dangerous individuals. New York State can reverse this terrible decision by giving local governments the power to implement our own laws rather than being bound by ineffective or absent state laws.”

In addition, beginning January 1, 2016 registration for thousands of Level 1 sex offender will end, and they will drop off the sex offender registry. If nothing is done, this will leave communities at greater risk.

“The decision by the appeals court erases years of legislation that protects victims from these predators,” stated Mayor Maura Sperry. “The fact that children can now be re-victimized is unconscionable, and I support all of our elected officials who are working to reenact sensible laws to restrict sex offenders and protect their victims.”

The New York State Legislature and Governor can call a special session to address both of these critical issues. Legislator Browning and Mayor Sperry are calling on our State officials to get this done in 2015 so that these important laws can be enforced in vulnerable communities that desperately need stricter protections from sexual predators.

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