



Criminal Justice Reform

This week, I was proud to join with my colleagues in the State Assembly to support the passage of a series of Criminal Justice reforms, including “**Kalief’s law**” and “**Raise the Age**” legislation that will update our criminal justice system to make it better and fairer for all.

[Kalief’s Law, seeks to bring clarity to the speedy trial provisions of the state’s Criminal Procedure Law \(A.3055-A\).](#) Under current statutes, prosecutors can declare that they are ready for trial and then seek an adjournment in court, effectively circumventing the timetable prescribed in state law. The bill is named for Kalief Browder, a young man whose court dates were repeatedly postponed during three years of pretrial incarceration. At age 16, Browder was sent to Rikers Island – where he spent two of his three years in solitary confinement – for robbery charges that were later dismissed. Following his release, he struggled with mental illness and committed suicide in 2015.

The bill would permit the court to inquire as to whether the prosecution is, in fact, “ready for trial” when the prosecution claims readiness. Under the bill, at each court appearance the judge would make a preliminary ruling on whether the time moving forward to the next court appearance date would be excluded or included in the speedy trial time for the overall case. In making such determination, the court would not be permitted to use “court congestion” as a basis for further delay. Additionally, the prosecution cannot truly be “ready for trial” unless required disclosure of evidence has been made and unless a proper accusatory instrument has been filed. As people sit in jail waiting for a court date that is being unnecessarily postponed, they’re losing their jobs, their homes and their families. A prompt trial is in everyone’s interest.

[The “Raise the Age” legislation would make the age of adult criminal responsibility 18, from 16, and prohibit juvenile defendants from being placed in an adult facility \(A.4876\).](#) **New York is one of only two states that try all 16 and 17-year-olds as adults.** By raising the age and treating nonviolent young people more appropriately, we can help give them a shot at a brighter future and increase public safety. In addition, the measure mandates that more services be made available to children and families in the Family Court system.

Environmental Conservation Committee Update

As part of the Joint Senate and Assembly Budget Hearing on the Executive Budget Proposal and its impact on Environmental Conservation on Monday, I had an opportunity to question the President and CEO of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) about important measures the state can take to create initiatives to reduce our carbon footprint and update our infrastructure in an energy efficient and cost effective manner. **[Please check out my full exchange with the CEO of NYSERDA here.](#)**

Legislative Update

Next week I will be introducing a number of election law bills that will include the following:

- **[To amend the election law, in relation to notifying voters of upcoming elections by requiring the State Board of Elections to mail out voting guides and postcards with information about candidates for election as well as require that major television and radio stations do public service announcements in the lead up to election day.](#)**
- To amend the election law, to allow for voters in New York State to apply for an absentee ballot for any reason.
- To amend the election law to notify voters in bold font on their registration form that New York practices a closed Primary system and detail the consequences of that.
- To amend the election law to allow for early voting to take place for 14 consecutive days up until the Thursday preceding the Election Date.
- To amend the election law, in relation to registering to vote and enrolling in a party within 10 days of any election.

For information on these bills or any other legislative or community ideas you may have, please reach out to my District Office at 718 788 7221.

Have a great President’s Day weekend,

Bobby