



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 874

Resolution urging the New York City Department of Probation and the New York State Division of Parole to track certain sex offenders with Global Positioning System monitoring technology.

By Council Member Vallone Jr.

Whereas, Sex offenders on probation or parole continue to leave communities across the nation feeling vulnerable and helpless in protecting their loved ones; and

Whereas, In combating sex offense crimes, New York State maintains a Sex Offender Registry which currently lists more than 18,000 sex offenders on parole, probation or in prison; and

Whereas, Additionally, the New York State Division of Parole has specialized units for the supervision of sex offenders and other high-risk cases, staffed by specially trained parole officers who make additional field contacts with the offenders and use standard surveillance devices such as electronic monitoring units to assist in the supervision effort; and

Whereas, The existing New York City probation system relies on the Department of Probation's High Risk and Special Offender Unit to provide intense supervision to approximately 1400 registered sex offenders and predatory pedophiles and the Mayoral Specially Targeted Offenders Project (STOP) targets the most dangerous of these offenders through tougher enforcement of Megan's Law; and

Whereas, Even with these initiatives, parole officers, probation supervisors and law enforcement agents do not have the resources and capabilities to effectively monitor the movements of each probationer or parolee; and

Whereas, Although New York City prosecutors are aggressively pursuing convictions against sex offenders who fail to register or verify their addresses under Megan's law, many unregistered sex offenders

remain at large, posing a potential threat; and

Whereas, According to Professor Karen J. Terry of John Jay College of Criminal Justice, who has spent eight years studying sex offender recidivism, “the current system is ineffective in tracking sex offenders” and that “studies in about a dozen states found registration laws alone to be ineffective in reducing sex offender recidivism because of low compliance,” which ranges from 30 to 70 percent; and

Whereas, In recent news, 16-year-old Stephanie Caruso was reportedly lured from her Hampton Bays home by a convicted sex offender on parole; and

Whereas, Companies such as iSECUREtrac, CellTrack, VeriTracks and Pro Tech Monitoring have introduced Global Positioning System (GPS) technology that tracks high risk offenders via a GPS ankle bracelet that notifies law enforcement members of the offenders’ movements with close to real time accuracy; and

Whereas, The GPS tracking system also informs the tracking center of any equipment tampering and can be programmed to sound an alarm if the offender is in close proximity to prohibited “exclusionary zones” such as playgrounds or schools; and

Whereas, This technology has already been implemented in 32 states and Washington D.C. as well as a few European cities; within New York, the Suffolk County Legislature recently passed a bill authorizing the use of GPS monitoring devices to track high risk sex offenders; and

Whereas, In Florida, where the tracking system has been in operation since 1997, recidivism rates among sex offenders have gone from around 50 percent to between 3 and 7 percent; and

Whereas, In light of the potential risks associated with repeat offenders and the responsibility of state and city lawmakers to protect vulnerable populations, the GPS monitoring technology is a reasonable next step to safeguarding the welfare of New Yorkers; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York urges the New York City Department of Probation and the New York State Division of Parole to track certain sex offenders with Global Positioning System

monitoring technology.

NK
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