

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATOR KARA HAHN



FIFTH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

**PRESS RELEASE**

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CONTACT: [Seth Squicciarino](#)

631-854-1650

516-639-3788

**INITIATIVE TO GET GUNS OUT OF THE HANDS OF  
UNSTABLE INDIVIDUALS PASSES UNANIMOUSLY**

*Suffolk Legislature adopts Hahn's common sense automatic gun check  
on those deemed a threat to themselves and others*



***Photo left to right:*** Legislator Jay Schneiderman, Captain Bill Read - Commanding Officer of Suffolk's Pistol Licensing Bureau, Legislator Sarah Anker, Legislator Kara Hahn and Legislator William Spencer gather to discuss a new policy adopted earlier today that is intended to keep guns out of the hands of mentally unstable individuals.

**PORT JEFFERSON, NY** – The Suffolk County Legislature today approved a measure sponsored by Kara Hahn (D-Setauket) intended to keep guns out of the hands of individuals who have been

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involuntarily transported to emergency rooms for psychiatric reasons. [The resolution](#) mandates that Suffolk law enforcement agencies cross reference the names and address of individuals undergoing a psychiatric crisis and transported to Stony Brook University's [Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program](#) (CPEP) against Suffolk County's pistol license registries. If there is a match between the name or home address and the registry, that information will automatically be provided to the respective pistol licensing bureau, where an investigation can be made regarding suspension or revocation of the license.

After learning of the bill's introduction, Suffolk County Police immediately adopted many of its provisions internally, considering it an effective tool to ward off violence at the hands of a potentially mentally unstable individual. Now, with the bills adoption, the policy will be codified and its reach will be extended in areas outside of the Suffolk County Police District.

Each year the Suffolk County Police Department transports more than 3,000 individuals to CPEP for evaluation. Those involuntarily referred to the unit have been deemed to be a potential threat to themselves and/or others by responding officers.

"In the days following all mass shootings there is always a search for missed warning signs," said Legislator Hahn. "An involuntary transport to a psychiatric emergency room should be a red flag of an individual's mental state. My goal is to never have to look back following a tragedy and ask, 'how this warning or that red flag was missed'."

In January, New York State adopted mental health provisions in its *NY Safe Act of 2013* that also allow for cross checking potentially unstable individuals against a yet to be created statewide pistol license database. When the State's plan is implemented, mental health officials will be responsible for reporting to law enforcement individuals suspected of being '*likely to engage in conduct that will cause serious harm to themselves or others.*' Legislator Hahn's legislation, unlike the New York State Law, will require police officers to make immediate referrals to the licensing bureau as is now common practice in domestic violence-related calls.

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"I applaud Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature for passing common sense gun control measures. My goal is to build upon the foundation of the NYSAFE Act in an effort to save lives," said Legislator Hahn. "Any potential redundancy that may occur in the future, vis a vis state law, will only help to provide multiple layers of security and protection."

"When Legislator Hahn brought this idea to my attention, I implemented it immediately because it has the potential to save lives," said Suffolk County Police Commissioner Edward Webber. "By codifying this procedure, the Legislature can demonstrate its support and make this check part of Suffolk County's law."

"In Connecticut, Colorado, Arizona, and in neighborhoods across this nation, too many lives have been tragically cut short by individuals who should never have had access to a gun in the first place," Legislator Hahn added. "Citizens and advocates on both sides of the gun control debate agree that keeping guns out of the hands of individuals deemed to have a serious mental illness and be a threat to themselves or others is crucial to preventing more mass killings. This is a common sense measure that moves us toward the goal of keeping guns from individuals too unstable to have access to such a weapon."

The bill will go to County Executive Steve Bellone for his signature. If signed, the new policy already in effect in the five western towns of Babylon, Brookhaven, Huntington, Islip and Smithtown will be expanded law enforcement departments outside the Police District develop plans that established reporting mechanisms consistent with the law.

"This is a simple connect the dots measure," Legislator Hahn added. "We are focusing in on the ones who have been identified as a threat to themselves or others."

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**306 Main Street  
Port Jefferson, New York 11777  
kara.hahn@suffolkcountyny.gov**

**Telephone: (631) 854-1650  
Fax: (631) 854-1653**