

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATOR KARA HAHN



FIFTH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

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***LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTS***

***WHILE CONGRESS DRAGS FEET ON GUN CONTROL***

*Hahn: Common Sense Automatic Gun Check  
Proposed & Implemented in Suffolk*

PORT JEFFERSON, NY – Suffolk County Legislator Kara Hahn (D-Setauket) has introduced a bill intended to keep guns out of the hands of individuals who have been involuntarily transported to emergency rooms for psychiatric reasons. [Introductory Resolution 1121-2013](#) will mandate that Suffolk law enforcement 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 Legislator Hahn is seeking to codify the policy and ensure its use in areas outside of the Suffolk County Police District.

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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 proposal, unlike the New York State Law, will call on police officers to make immediate referrals to the licensing bureau as is now common practice in domestic violence-related calls.

“Although the Federal and State Governments continue to work on common sense gun control measures, I thought it was important to enact this law as quickly as possible. I want to ensure that this critical gap was closed now because each time we address a loophole, we potentially 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.”

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“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. I am confident this legislation will have wide-spread support.”

The bill will be considered by the Legislature’s Public Safety Committee this Thursday, February 28<sup>th</sup> and may be voted on by the full Legislature as early as Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>.

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