

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE



Office of Legislator Robert Trotta

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Legislator Trotta's Bill to Ensure Direct Access to Emergency Services via 911 Passes Unanimously

(Smithtown, NY)...Suffolk County Legislator Robert Trotta's legislation, IR 1325, to ensure access to emergency services when dialing 911 from hotels, motels and businesses in Suffolk County, was passed unanimously at the July 29 meeting of the full Legislature. "Residents expect that if they dial 911 from a phone they will reach a dispatcher who can help. But this is not always true," according to Legislator Trotta.

Last December, Kari Hunt Dunn met her estranged husband in a Texas hotel room so that he could visit their three children, ages nine, four and three. During the meeting, Kari's husband forced her into the bathroom and began stabbing her. Kari's nine year old daughter did what every child is instructed to do in an emergency – she dialed 911. The call did not go through and she kept trying. She dialed four times but never reached emergency personnel. The reason was, unbeknownst to her, that particular hotel's multi-line phone system required her to dial "9" first to reach an outside line. Tragically, Kari died from the wounds suffered during the attack.

Having recently retired from the Suffolk County Police Department and with his 10 years of experience on the FBI's Violent Crime Task Force, Legislator Trotta is extremely interested in this public safety issue and attended the National Emergency Numbers Association conference, at his own expense, to meet with Commissioner Ajit Pai of the Federal Communications Commission, a featured speaker, and to get his input on public safety communications and direct access to 911 from multi line phone systems used in hotels and motels.

Suffolk Legislator Robert Trotta does not want local businesses to incur a financial burden, but he is concerned about the safety and well-being of residents, business people traveling and tourists staying in Suffolk's hotels/motels and the employees who work in these establishments. It is his contention that most of the multi- line phone systems can be remediated to allow direct access to 911. "Those companies that cannot comply would be required to have a sticker on the phone instructing the person to dial 9-911," said Trotta.

“I thank my colleagues for supporting this legislation. Mr. Hank Hunt gave an outstanding address to the Public Safety Committee, sharing the story of his daughter’s tragic death in Texas,” said Legislator Robert Trotta. “I hope that passage of this legislation will prevent the loss of another person’s life and bring some solace to the Hunt family, who are advocating for a national law. With Suffolk County passing this landmark legislation, I am optimistic that this will be the impetus for the Hunt’s dream to become a reality,” added Legislator Trotta.

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Legislator Robert Trotta represents the 13th Legislative District, which includes Smithtown, Fort Salonga, Kings Park, San Remo, Nissequogue, Head of the Harbor, and St. James, as well as most of East Northport and parts of Northport and Commack. Legislator Trotta serves on the Legislature’s Budget & Finance, Education & Information Technology, Health and the Humans Services Committees.

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