

TOWN OF WEST SENECA



SHEILA M. MEEGAN
TOWN SUPERVISOR

To: Fellow Town Board Members
From: Sheila M. Meegan, Town Supervisor
Date: December 16, 2019
Re: **Resolution Opposing the Criminal Justice Reform**

Kindly move to adopt the attached resolution

WHEREAS, these crimes include Assault in the Third Degree, Aggravated Vehicular Assault, and other crimes of physical violence against people; and

WHEREAS, these crimes include Burglary of a Residence, resulting in the immediate release of these individuals back into the neighborhoods they are suspected of targeting; and

WHEREAS, these crimes include Bail Jumping and Unlawfully Fleeing a Police Officer in a Motor Vehicle, resulting in release on recognizance of the very individuals who have demonstrated a propensity to evade the law; and

WHEREAS, all of the offenders mentioned heretofore are at risk of not showing up for court, thereby placing a burden on public employees who, under this law, are required to send multiple court appearance reminders to these offenders, as well as police officers and District Attorneys who must commit resources to tracking and pursuing those who evade prosecution; and

WHEREAS, all offenders who are currently being held in custody for non-qualifying crimes including those mentioned heretofore will be eligible for release from custody on January 1, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the discovery mandates imposed by the State of New York will require police and District Attorneys, beginning January 1, 2020, to turn over voluminous trial-related materials to defense attorneys within 15 days, creating a mandate that will inevitably not be achieved in some cases and may result in the inability of the People to properly prosecute cases against criminal defendants; and

WHEREAS, discovery reform will also result in an opportunity for defendants to gain access to crime scenes that may include a victim's residence, thereby giving defendants accused of burglaries, assaults, rapes and other crimes committed in victims' homes the right to return to those same homes; and

WHEREAS, the issues mentioned heretofore will undeniably impact past, present and future victims of crime in a negative manner, and in so doing, the bail and discovery reforms adopted by the State of New York will themselves further victimize these innocent individuals; and

WHEREAS, these bail and discovery laws, in their current form, represent a clear and present danger to society, will tilt the scales of justice in favor of suspected criminals and away from innocent crime victims, and risk reversing decades of bipartisan progress made by the State of New York in reducing crime; and

WHEREAS, the fundamental responsibility of governments to protect the vulnerable in society demands that the shortcomings of these laws be remedied prior to their effective date of January 1, 2020,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town of West Seneca along with the Association of Erie County Governments hereby supports legislation (S.6853) introduced by Senator Chris Jacobs and implores the State of New York to immediately amend or otherwise delay implementation of these laws by convening an emergency session of the State Legislature, or by emergency executive authority, or by any other means deemed possible by the State, and to do so before December 31, 2019; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town of West Seneca along with the Association of Erie County Governments asks all counties in New York State to urge their state representatives to take immediate action on the foregoing issues, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be provided to all the appropriate agencies and officials within NYS Government.