

# 'REVENGE PORN' BILL APPROVED

19-0 bipartisan Nassau vote; jail, fines in the offing

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Nassau legislators on Monday unanimously passed a bill to make posting of intimate sexual images of partners without consent a crime punishable with jail time and fines.

The bill, which also would give victims the ability to pursue civil cases, outlaws the practice known as "revenge porn" and is expected to be signed into law next week by County Executive Laura Curran, a Democrat.

All 19 members of the Republican-controlled legislature voted for the bill, sponsored by Legis. Arnold Drucker (D-Plainview) and Legis. Debra Mulé (D-Freeport).

The measure resembles legislation that passed last year in Suffolk County, and in New York City in 2017. Convictions would carry penalties of up to a year in jail time and a \$1,000 fine. The bill also would allow victims to sue for damages and other relief.

Backers said the legislation would bring relief to victims who suffer humiliation and may lose employment or career opportunities as a result of images posted to social media or distributed via digital message.

"This legislation fills a hole in the legal system," said Mulé. "Crimes of this sort were not able to be addressed in the past. The law needs to keep up with technology."

Drucker said, "This was really an example of how government should work where you get complete bipartisan support for the type of legislation we were elected to enact, that which protects our residents, our citizens."



Educator Elizabeth Osowiecki and Carmen DiBartolomeo, whose family suffered, celebrate the passing.

Carmen DiBartolomeo, 45, a librarian from North Merrick, testified at a committee hearing that revenge porn hurt her family.

In 2016, her brother, John Rosalia of Oceanside, was in the midst of a bitter divorce when his then-wife distributed images of his genitals via text message to several family members.

Due to shame and other contributing factors, Rosalia took his own life in 2016 at the age of 46, DiBartolomeo said.

DiBartolomeo, present for the legislative vote Monday, said of Rosalia, "I can't change what happened to him but I can fight to change so it doesn't happen to somebody else."

Other advocates of the bill say the legislation will help better define the meaning of consent between sexual partners.

Elizabeth Osowiecki, an educa-

tor at Safe Center, a Bethpage nonprofit that aids victims of sexual violence, said the "legislation will send a message that consent is important even via technology, and our laws must reflect this."

Nassau District Attorney Madeline Singas said the law sends a "strong and unified message that this conduct will not be tolerated." She previously wrote the legislature in support of the bill.

"When I started my career as a domestic violence prosecutor, social media and smartphones didn't exist. Now, more than two decades later, domestic violence abusers are adapting technology to harass and intimidate their partners. Too many people — particularly young women — are being shamed, humiliated and harmed with threats of revenge

porn," Singas said.

County Executive Laura Curran backs the bill. Spokeswoman Christine Geed said the measure will "protect potential victims from personal and professional humiliation and other potential ramifications of 'revenge porn.'"

Also Tuesday, Nassau lawmakers unanimously approved: ■ A bill to amend a law protecting whistleblowers who are county employees. Under the measure, county employees with complaints or information about improprieties no longer need to notify their direct supervisors.

■ A bill to create a \$100,000 cap on all county vendor service contracts. The legislation, proposed by Legis. Delia DeRiggi-Whitton (D-Glen Cove), would require vendors to come before the county legislature to make formal requests to exceed the cap.

## Republicans pick Kennedy to face Bellone

BY RICK BRAND  
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Suffolk County Republicans named Comptroller John Kennedy on Monday night as their county executive candidate, saying he would end Democratic incumbent Steve Bellone's "legacy of financial disaster" and "restore fiscal sanity to our county."

Kennedy, 62, was designated by acclamation of about 130 Republicans at the Portuguese-American Center in Farmingville. Democrats held no convention but prepared petitions for various local offices. Committee members in both major parties can begin circulating nominating petitions today.

Kennedy, in an interview before the convention, said,



John Kennedy at the convention.

"We've gone through seven bond down ratings, six years of financial emergencies and . . . financial reserves that are dwindling."

Later at the convention, he said, "The Republican way is

the way to bring our county back and solve our fiscal problems."

Jason Elan, Bellone's spokesman, said: "The Republicans are nominating a financial phony who has been anything but a fiscal conservative. In fact, he's more liberal in many ways than Ted Kennedy."

John Kennedy, a Nesconset resident, narrowly won re-election to a second term last year, and has about \$120,000 in his coffers, compared with Bellone's \$2 million entering the race.

Brookhaven Supervisor Edward Romaine, who nominated Kennedy, said the comptroller has faced uphill battles before, winning four years ago with only one ballot line and \$120,000 against a foe who had four lines, and outspent him by

eight times. "He is undoubtedly the leader Suffolk needs now," Romaine said.

Hours before the convention, Republican Legis. Robert Trotta of Fort Salonga, who also had announced his candidacy for county executive, said he had decided to step aside so that the GOP will have a united front against Bellone. He also attacked Bellone's massive fundraising, which Trotta said includes "money he laundered through bloated contracts."

Richard Schaffer, Suffolk Democratic Party chairman, said the decision to forgo a convention had nothing to do with his continuing clashes with Bellone, who is seeking a third four-year term. Because of changes in state election law, Schaffer said, "Everything

is rushed, and I'd rather have committee members talking to voters than filling helium balloons."

Despite their disagreements, Schaffer said, he supports Bellone for re-election. "His record of accomplishments is second to none with the lowest crime statistics, the most up-to-date crime fighting technology and the most innovative water protection program in the country."

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