



Andrew M. Cuomo - Governor

Contact Information:
Governor's Press Office
NYC Press Office: 212.681.4640
Albany Press Office: 518.474.8418
press.office@exec.ny.gov

Governor Cuomo Signs Legislation to Enhance Fire Prevention and Safety for College Students

“Kerry Rose Fire Sprinkler Notification Act” Will Help Educate College Students About Fire Prevention and Safety after Tragic Fire at Off-Campus Housing Unit at Marist College

Albany, NY (July 25, 2013)

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today signed legislation that would require public and private colleges in New York State to provide written information on fire safety and sprinkler systems to students residing in college-owned or operated housing.

“Fire safety and prevention must be a top priority, especially at colleges where young people often don’t know what systems are in place to keep them safe in a fire,” Governor Cuomo said. “It was a tragedy for our entire state when Marist student Kerry Rose Fitzsimons and two other young people lost their lives in a fire last year. This new law will improve fire safety awareness for our college students so we can prevent tragic incidents like this from happening again.”

Under current law, colleges are required to publish fire safety standards as part of a federally required annual report. However, they are not required to notify resident students about such standards as part of the housing process. The new law (A. 5715-A/S. 4180-B) signed today by the Governor would require that public and private colleges in New York provide a written fire safety notification to each student living in a college-owned or operated housing facility, both on and off campus. This notification would include a description of the fire safety system for the student’s housing facility, including whether or not the housing facility is equipped with a fire sprinkler system. This notification would also include information on how to access the college’s campus fire safety report required by federal law. The new law takes effect immediately.

The legislation is known as the Kerry Rose Fire Sprinkler Notification Act. Kerry Rose Fitzsimons was a student at Marist College who died, along with two others, in a January 2012 fire in her off-campus housing unit. Her family and friends have started the “Kerry Rose Foundation” to educate college students about fire prevention and safety.

Senator Joseph Robach said, “This bill gives parents and students proper information so they can make the safest and most informative decision when choosing college housing. I applaud Governor Cuomo for signing this bill in to law and hope it will help ease the minds of parents across New York State.”

Assembly Member Michael DenDekker said, “I want to thank the family of Kerry Rose Fitzsimons for starting the Kerry Rose Foundation to educate students and parents on the importance of fire safety and the added safety of fire suppression systems in college owned housing, both on and off campuses. I am gratified that Governor Cuomo signed my legislation (A5715) that requires colleges to notify their students as to whether the dorms are equipped with sprinkler systems. I firmly believe that college students and their families have the right to be informed of matters concerning their personal safety and in this case, fire safety, so hopefully there will be significant reductions in fatalities or injuries due to fires.”