

DISTRICT ATTORNEYS ASSOCIATION OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

particularly in New York City. Surely it is not the intent of the legislature to make it easier for people to carry dangerous weapons in light of this alarming upward trend in knife crimes.

In early May, Mayor DeBlasio highlighted the increase in knife-related crimes:

“Guns are being taken off of the street in an unprecedented way. Some people are unfortunately turning to a different weapon [knives]... the NYPD will now go get those weapons.”

From January 1 to March 22, 2016, nearly 900 knife crimes were recorded in New York City, an increase of about 22% from the same period in 2015. In early March, the NYPD reported that 212 cutting instruments had been confiscated in the subways, which was a 46% increase over the same period in 2015.

There is no doubt that illegal knives are dangerous. And while we recognize the concerns that the sponsors raise, there is little evidence that bona fide knife users are being arrested and prosecuted when they are using their knife as a tool. Meanwhile, there is ample evidence that criminals are increasingly turning to knives as the weapon of choice.

DAASNY is happy to work together to craft language that will protect the transport or use of gravity and switchblade knives for a legitimate purpose while holding accountable those who carry and use such knives for nefarious purposes. As a starting point, a memo from the New York County District Attorney’s Office (attached) provides some options that would satisfy the concerns of the bill sponsors and the law enforcement community in a balanced and measured way.

Until such language can be agreed upon and enacted into law, DAASNY strongly urges you to veto S6483A/A9042A.

Sincerely,



Thomas P. Zugibe
President, DAASNY
District Attorney, Rockland County

cc: Senator Savino (savino@senate.state.ny.us)
Assemblyman Quart (quartd@assembly.state.ny.us)

ⁱ There is no way to know how many of those were gravity knives since all of the following weapon types are included in PL 265.01 (1): “any firearm, electronic dart gun, electronic stun gun, gravity knife, switchblade knife, pilum ballistic knife, metal knuckle knife, cane sword, billy,

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blackjack, bludgeon, plastic knuckles, metal knuckles, chuka stick, sand bag, sandclub, wrist-brace type slingshot or slungshot, shirken or "Kung Fu star."