






Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Signs "Daniel's Law"

11/20/2020

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today signed legislation (A1649), which protects the home addresses and telephone numbers of judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement officers from public disclosure. The bill, known as "Daniel's Law," is named in honor of Daniel Salas, a U.S. District Court Judge (https://www.uscourts.gov/courts/district-court-judges) whose wife, Esther Salas, was killed in a senseless act of gun violence committed by an individual who had compiled a dossier of personal information about Judge Salas, including the judge's home address (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...).   


"This is a renewed commitment to ensure our judiciary, prosecutors, and members of law enforcement who answer the call of justice can do so without fear for their personal safety, or that of their loved ones," **said Governor Murphy.** "By shielding the home addresses and contact information of those who serve on the bench and enforce our laws, we are demonstrating that in the face of unspeakable tragedy, New Jersey responds not with thoughts and prayers, but with concrete action."  

"My husband, Mark, and I would like to thank Governor Murphy and all the men and women of the New Jersey State Legislature for enacting this trailblazing legislation," **said U.S. District Court Judge Esther Salas.** "We hope this law can be a steppingstone to improving the security of my sisters and brothers who serve as federal judges throughout the country. Nobody should be forced to endure the kind of pain my family has experienced ever again. Together we can work to ensure that all members of the judiciary (federal, state, and municipal courts) can perform their duties without fear of retribution or harm. Daniel used to say, 'Mom, I love talking with you.' I know Daniel is listening now, and he is smiling down on us today because he knows that with this bill signing, we are doing our part to ensure that his death will not be in vain."

The bill amends the Open Public Records Act ("OPRA") to exclude from the definition of a government (i.e., public) record the portion of any document which discloses the home address of any active or retired 1) judge, 2) prosecutor or 3) law enforcement officer.

Further, the bill prohibits government agencies, individuals and businesses from knowingly publishing on the internet, or otherwise making available, the home address or unpublished home telephone number of any active or retired judge or any active or retired prosecutor.

The bill also enables any active or retired judge, prosecutor, or law enforcement officer whose home address or unpublished telephone number is disclosed on the internet or otherwise made available to the public, or whose immediate family member's name, home address, or unpublished phone number is disclosed on the internet or otherwise made available to the public, to request that the information be removed. The government agency, individual or business would be required to remove the information within 72 hours of receiving such a request in writing.

"Daniel Anderl's tragic death reminds us that the disclosure of personal information can leave judges and family members vulnerable to threats and violence," **said Chief Justice Stuart Rabner.** "We are grateful to the Governor and the Legislature for taking this important step to provide common sense protections for active and retired judges and their families, along with others in the justice system, in the hope that a future tragedy can be prevented." 

"Judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement officers all play vital roles in keeping the public safe, but in doing so, they often jeopardize their own safety, becoming targets of vengeful criminals or litigants," **said Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal**. "We need to protect them as they protect all of us. This commonsense law will go a long way to ensure the privacy and security of these public servants and their families."

"To everyone who played a role in getting this done, I thank you. However, our work does not end here. We must extend these privacy protections nationwide, so that no one lives through what Judge Salas and her husband lived through," **said U.S. Senator Bob Menendez**. "We are living in a time of endless vitriol, rising hate crimes, and increased personal attacks. And while we may not be able to eliminate hatred from someone's heart, we can take action to better protect the men and women of our federal bench. That's why I am proud to see Governor Murphy sign Daniel's Law here in New Jersey— and why I remain committed to the passage of the Daniel Anderl Judicial Security and Privacy Act in Washington."

"No person who takes on the responsibility of serving as a federal judge should ever have to live in fear that they or their family could be targeted by someone who is able to easily access their personal information," **said U.S. Senator Cory Booker**. "Judge Salas and her husband, Mark, have gone through something that no parent should ever have to endure. I am grateful for Governor Murphy, Senator Murphy, and Assemblywoman Quijano as we honor the memory of Daniel with a commitment that this should never happen again."

Primary sponsors of A1649 include Assemblymembers Annette Quijano, Yvonne Lopez, Craig Coughlin, and Ralph Caputo, and Senators Joe Cryan, Nicholas Scutari, Nellie Pou, and Bob Smith.

"Making tough decisions is part of the job for judges and prosecutors. Sometimes these decisions aren't popular, and they become a target. It's frightening to think that disgruntled individuals may be able to find their home addresses and personal phone numbers readily available at the touch of a button," **said Assemblymembers Quijano, Lopez, Coughlin and Caputo in a joint statement**. "Our hearts continue to break for Judge Salas and her family. The goal of this bill is to better protect the privacy of judges and prosecutors by prohibiting their personal addresses and contact information from being shared online without their consent."

"This law will honor the legacy of Daniel Anderl and respect the loving memories of his family," **said Senator Joe Cryan, a former Union County Sheriff who oversaw courthouse security in Union County**. "This was a tragic act of violence targeted at a respected judge and her family because the gunman was able to locate their home address. It was also an attack on the justice system that was felt by everyone who serves or has served in law enforcement. They devote their lives to the safety of the public — they should be kept safe as well."

"We must act to protect our public officials and their families from potential attacks," **said Senator Nicholas Scutari, Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee**. "The targeting of Judge Salas at her private residence by a gunman, resulting in the tragic death of her son and the serious wounding of her husband, underscores the need for us to do more to protect our judges and their families. Domestic terrorism is a very real threat in today's society. Not long ago, a gunman attempted to take the life of then-Congresswoman Gabby Giffords, another gunman opened fire at a congressional softball game and, most recently, there was the foiled plot to kidnap and murder the governor of Michigan. This is a vital first step in ensuring the safety of our public officials in New Jersey."

"Judges and other court officers who serve our legal system deserve to be protected from any possible attack or retaliation for merely performing their sworn duties. What happened to Judge Esther Salas, and her family, and in particular the fatal shooting of her son, Daniel, in his own home, must never happen again," **said Senator Nellie Pou**. "This law, restricting access to home addresses of judges and others who work in our court system will add a needed layer of protection for these public servants."

"As a representative and resident from Middlesex County, I was shocked, heartbroken and angered by the home attack on Judge Salas and her family, which left her husband critically wounded and ended in the death of her son, Daniel," **said Senator Bob Smith**. "The Salas family are among my constituents, so it is

important for me that I am a part of any action we take in response to this horrific incident. We have to do more to protect our judges, prosecutors and law enforcement officers from violent retaliation, especially in a time when people are actually planning physical violence against civil servants."

"This measure takes the steps necessary to obscure details about judges that could put them and their families at risk," **said Senator Robert Singer**. "There is so much information exchanged online, and a reckless post or an innocuous comment can, in the wrong hands, be dangerous. Enacting this law will help increase security for judges our legal system relies on."

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