



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

## Harckham, Slater Call for Passage of Jake's Law—Safety Cameras in Roadway Work Zones

PETE HARCKHAM May 13, 2024

| ISSUE: SENATOR HARCKHAM. SD40, HIGHWAY WORKER SAFETY, SPEED CAMERAS, YORKTOWN, JAKE'S LAW



State Sen. Pete Harckham at the podium during the Jake's law press conference

Jake's Law is named for Jake Arcara, a 28-year-old Yorktown highway worker tragically killed in Sept. 2022 while he was directing traffic

*Yorktown Heights, NY* – New York State Senator Pete Harckham and Assemblymember Matt Slater called for passage of Jake's Law, their legislation that will authorize the Town of

Yorktown to deploy safety cameras in roadway work zones and impose monetary liability.

The press conference took place on Saturday, May 11 at the Town of Yorktown Highway Department facility. Jake's Law is named for Jake Arcara, a 28-year-old Yorktown highway worker tragically killed by a driver in Sept. 2022 while he was directing traffic as a work crew installed drainage pipes along a local roadway.

Also attending the press conference was Kelly Arcara, Jake's mother, a number of Yorktown officials, including Town Supervisor Ed Lachterman and Highway Superintendent Dave Paganelli, and Assemblymember Dana Levenberg, a cosponsor of Jake's Law.

"Every day hard working men and women like Jake Acara go to work and are recklessly killed or injured by distracted drivers," said Slater. "Jake's Law, which should be a statewide initiative, will give an added layer of protection to our municipal workers in an effort to avoid another senseless tragedy."

"We need this legislation, spurred by Jake Acara's senseless death while serving his community, passed and signed into law, so we can purposely work to save lives, both in Yorktown and statewide, in the future," said Harckham. "It's crucial that we identify reckless and accident-prone drivers while we can, and also ensure there is accountability following accidents that result in grave injuries or deaths. I thank Assemblymember Slater for his leadership on this issue, and will always be grateful to Kelly Arcara for her courage and determination in turning pain to purpose."

"We can't have safe, smooth roads if we don't have safe work zones," said Levenberg. "Jake's Law will make Yorktown's work zones safer, enabling highway crews to show up to work with the confidence that they can do their jobs and get home to their families. As a former Town Supervisor, I know how critical these workers are to our communities, and this is one

more way we can show our appreciation for all the essential work they do. I am grateful to be able to co-sponsor this legislation, and I thank Senator Harckham and Assemblymember Slater for introducing it.”

Slater and Harckham’s bill ([A.9283A](#) / [S.9304](#)), which will give the Town of Yorktown the ability to install and operate a monitoring system with a photo speed camera, as well as impose monetary liability on speeders. This legislation was inspired by the Automated Work Zone Speed Monitoring Pilot Program launched in April 2023 by the New York State department of Transportation (NYSDOT) and New York State Thruway Authority (NYSTA).

Road work zones are dangerous areas for those working to repair the roads and roadside utility infrastructure. Too often, drivers disregard speed limits while driving through these areas, putting the lives and safety of road workers at risk. It is impossible to station a police officer in every work zone across the state. Harckham and Slater’s bill will allow the Town of Yorktown to install temporary speed cameras in these areas to discourage dangerous driving habits to better protect its road workers.

**Kelly Acara** said, “God took Jake as a purpose to pass this law. Jake was a very spiritual, beautiful person who loved his family, and this is something that should never have happened. I am thankful for our elected officials and our highway workers for their support in trying to get this law passed and throughout the loss of my son.”

The need to do more to protect the workers who keep New York moving and get bad drivers off the roads remains critical. A Thruway maintenance worker was killed and another injured on May 9 in a work zone accident on I-90 near Rochester. [Last month, a truck driver killed three highway maintenance workers on the shoulder of a Pennsylvania highway.](#)

In the US in 2022, 891 people killed and 37,701 injured in work zone crashes. Last month, a truck driver killed three highway maintenance workers on the shoulder of a Pennsylvania highway. In New York, seven highway workers were killed in roadside accidents in 2021 and another seven were killed in 2022. Governor Hochul unveiled a memorial honoring New York's fallen highway workers at the 2021 New York State Fair. The NYSDOT, just in itself, has lost nearly 60 workers in its existence.

**Yorktown Supervisor Ed Lachterman** said, "This is not a party issue, this is a human being and safety issue. I hope Albany can see that this is a law that needs to be passed, and I know we have great champions like Assemblyman Matt Slater, Senator Harckham, and Assemblywoman Dana Levenberg, who are working on getting this across the finish line."

**Yorktown Highway Superintendent Dave Paganelli** said, "I would like to thank our state officials for their efforts in memorializing Jake with this law. Since the tragic day when Jake was killed, we have worked with the Yorktown Police Department to take extra measures to protect our workers, such as closing down the street while our crews are out working. While this has helped, in the past year there have been multiple times drivers have still violated work zones. Jake's law will help keep our workers safe as they do their jobs and keep drivers accountable."

**Westchester County Board of Legislators Chair Vedat Gashi** said, "As legislators, our foremost duty is to ensure the safety and well-being of our residents, including those who work tirelessly to keep our roadways functioning smoothly. Jake's Law represents a pivotal step forward in our commitment to protecting these invaluable workers and making our roads safer for all. The tragic incident in September 2022 serves as a stark reminder of the urgent need for measures like safety cameras in roadway work zones. Sponsored by Assemblymember Matt Slater and Senator Pete Harckham, this law embodies our collective resolve to hold reckless drivers accountable. Let us stand united in our efforts to keep New

York moving while prioritizing the safety of those who tirelessly serve our communities.”

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### 2023-S9304

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- Introduced
  
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
  
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
  
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
  
- Delivered to Governor
  
- Signed By Governor
  
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Relates to demonstration programs imposing monetary liability on the owner of a vehicle for failure of an operator thereof to comply with certain posted maximum speed limits in the town of Yorktown

May 10, 2024

In Senate Committee [Transportation](#)

Sponsored by **Pete Harckham**

Do you support this bill?