



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Eric Adams

## NYS Senator Eric Adams confronts the culture of "hit and runs" and urges toughening the vehicular accident laws in New York State

ERIC ADAMS February 23, 2010

| ISSUE: **TRANSPORTATION**

### MEDIA ADVISORY

NYS SENATOR ERIC ADAMS RESPONDS TO HIT-AND-RUN INJURY OF ERINN PHELAN, INSISTING THAT WE CONFRONT THE CULTURE OF HIT-AND-RUN BY INCREASING PENALTIES FOR LEAVING THE SCENE OF A VEHICULAR ACCIDENT

NYS Senator Eric Adams assails the culture of hit and run and urges toughening the vehicular accident laws in New York State. Noting that current regulations actually incentivize leaving the scene of an accident because lax laws minimize the penalty, Senator Adams wants them strengthened so that leaving the scene of an accident never results in just a summons.

Senator Adams states: "Following yet another tragic hit and run, we must reexamine our laws to make certain that individuals never leave the scene of an accident without facing severe penalties.

“New York City has been plagued by a large number of hit and runs. Some few get attention, but most do not; this problem persists because of our lax accident laws.

“Under current law, if a person leaves the scene of an accident that involves property damage only, he/she is merely given a summons if apprehended. If no one is caught, then the event is treated as a violation and never investigated by detectives. However, were fleeing the scene upgraded to a misdemeanor, then police detectives would conduct a thorough investigation.

“Therefore, current statutes incentivize leaving the scene of an accident, particularly if a driver is intoxicated or uninsured: it is in his/her interest to leave because at worst, he/she receives a summons. If he/she remains at the scene, an arrest is likely, so why take that chance? This encourages rogue drivers and promotes disregard for someone who may be injured in an accident. It is important to realize that when a driver strikes an occupied vehicle and flees the scene, he/she does not know whether any personal injury was caused. We must inculcate the concept that every incident must be reported to the proper authorities.

“I have introduced a bill (S555) to increase the penalty for and automatically revoke the license of any driver who leaves the scene of an accident without properly reporting the incident to officials. Prompt response to a vehicular accident can be the life-or-death difference for an injured person who requires immediate emergency medical care. My proposed law will hold drivers who improperly leave the scene of an accident criminally responsible for their reckless behavior. I encourage its passage.”

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