



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

Senator Fuschillo, Governor Paterson, & Families of Dwi Victims Remind Residents That Ignition Interlock Law Takes Effect Sunday

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. August 12, 2010

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Law Requires Ignition Interlocks for All Convicted Drunk Drivers

Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick) today joined with Governor David Paterson, Assemblyman Harvey Weisenberg, law enforcement and the families of Leandra Rosado and Katie Flynn to remind residents that New York State's new ignition interlock law, which he sponsored, goes into effect this Sunday, August 15th. Other local officials, including Senator Owen Johnson (R-Babylon) and Assemblymembers Dave McDonough (R-North Merrick), Tom McKeivitt (R-East Meadow), and Joe Saladino (R-Massapequa) were also present to help raise awareness about the law.

"I fought for this new law to ensure that an ignition interlock will take the weapon out of a drunk driver's hands. Ignition interlocks have been proven effective at stopping convicted drunk drivers from committing repeat DWI crimes. With drunk drivers killing hundreds of people on New York's roads every

year, this is an important and critical step to end the drunk driving epidemic in New York State," said Senator Fuschillo.

"This week, New York State will take a huge leap forward in continuing our efforts to make our roadways safer. With this important provision, New York State now has some of the toughest DWI laws in the nation, with a strong focus on prevention. Requiring ignition interlocks for drunk drivers will prevent more senseless deaths and spare other families the endless grief suffered by those who knew and loved Leandra Rosado and Katie Flynn," said Governor Paterson.

Under the law, which Senator Fuschillo sponsored along with Senator Martin Dilan and Assemblyman Harvey Weisenberg, all convicted drunk drivers must install and use an ignition interlock in all their vehicles. Ignition interlocks are breath test devices linked to a vehicle's ignition system which prevent the car from starting if alcohol is detected in the driver's breath. Costs for installing the interlock will be borne by the offender.

Drivers will be required to periodically blow into the interlock after the car starts to ensure that they are complying. Anyone attempting to circumvent the interlock would be guilty of a class A misdemeanor and face up to one year in jail.

Ignition interlocks have been proven effective in reducing repeat drunk driving offenses. The state of New Mexico saw DWI crashes drop by 31%, DWI related injuries drop by 39%, and DWI related fatalities drop by 35% after enacting a similar mandatory ignition interlock law.

The measure is part of Leandra's Law, which also created felony charges for individuals who drive drunk with a child in the car. Over 300 people have already been arrested under the law for endangering the lives of children. The law was named after 11 year old Leandra Rosado, who was killed when the car she was riding in crashed on the Henry Hudson Parkway last October. The driver of the car pled guilty to driving drunk.

Leandra's father, Lenny Rosado, who worked with Senator Fuschillo to get the law passed, said "I didn't want any other parent, no other mother or father, to go through the pain that I go through every day. We needed to do something about driving drunk with children, and we are doing something about this: we have one of the toughest laws in the country. My mission is to make sure we put an end to this, stop this madness, and stop damaging families."

Neil and Jennifer Flynn, whose seven year old daughter Katie was killed by a drunk driver on the Meadowbrook Parkway in 2005, said: "We live with the pain of Katie's death every day. So, in the hopes of saving others from suffering the loss of a child, we've joined in the fight against drunk driving, and we support legislation that results in aggressive DWI prosecutions. As long as we can make a difference, we will continue to do everything we can to change the permissive culture that still surrounds drunk driving."

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