



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

Fuschillo Bill Creating Tougher Penalties for Wrong Way Drivers Approved by Transportation Committee

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. March 1, 2011

| ISSUE: **TRANSPORTATION**

Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick) today announced that legislation he sponsors creating tougher penalties for wrong-way drivers has been approved by the Senate Transportation Committee.

“Wrong way drivers have caused tragedy and repeatedly put lives at risk, especially on Long Island. Giving law enforcement another tool to prosecute reckless drivers would make sure this serious crime carries a more serious punishment. I am pleased that this legislation has been approved by the Transportation Committee and hope that it will soon be passed by the full Senate,” said Senator Fuschillo.

Nassau County District Attorney Kathleen Rice, who worked jointly with Senator Fuschillo in drafting the legislation, said “Senator Fuschillo has once again demonstrated his leadership in the area of vehicular crimes. This proposed legislation addresses a number of deadly driving hazards we all witness too often. First and most urgently it makes wrong way driving a felony. But it goes further and accounts for other deadly criminal driving—high speed, reckless drivers chasing one another through traffic and drunk drivers who add dangerous speeding to the already dangerous act of being drunk or high behind the wheel. We applaud Senator Fuschillo and the Transportation Committee for listening to prosecutors and working to make our roads safe.”

The legislation (S3452) establishes a new crime of aggravated reckless driving, which would apply to:

- * Drivers who drive down the roads the wrong way, against the flow of traffic;
- * Drivers who drive more than 30 miles an hour over the speed limit while intoxicated or impaired;
- * Drivers who drive more than 30 miles an hour over the speed limit while racing, pursuing other vehicles, or excessively weaving in and out of traffic.

Aggravated reckless driving would be a class E felony, punishable by a prison sentence of up to four years.

In addition, the legislation would raise the penalty for reckless driving to a class A misdemeanor, punishable by a prison sentence of up to one year. Reckless driving is currently an unclassified misdemeanor and carries a maximum prison sentence of up to 30 days.

There have been at least 18 wrong way driving incidents on Long Island since last November, all of which involved drunk driving.

###