



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senate Passes Bill Cracking Down on Texting While Driving

JACK M. MARTINS May 3, 2011

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The New York State Senate today passed a bill (S.998B) that will make it easier for law enforcement to crack down on texting-while-driving offenses and prevent tragic accidents caused by drivers distracted by texting.

The bill would make text messaging while driving a primary violation rather than a secondary violation. Under the current law, a driver can only be cited for texting-while-driving if another violation, such as speeding, is also being cited.

A bipartisan group of State Legislators was joined at by representatives of the American Automobile Association (AAA) New York to discuss the Senate's action and to urge the Assembly to vote on the bill as soon as possible. Federal data shows 16,000 deaths nationwide due to texting while driving.

According to a study by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, a driver is 23 percent more likely to be involved in an accident while text messaging. The (AAA) says that any activity that takes a driver's attention off the road for more than two seconds can double the risk of a crash. Some research has shown that distracted drivers are more impaired than those who are drunk or under the influence of drugs.

According to studies done by AAA, any activity that takes a driver's attention off the road for more than two seconds can double a driver's risk of a crash. The huge increase in text messaging as a form of communication, particularly among young people, has led to a new form of distracted driving which is being blamed for tragedies throughout New York State and the nation. In 2009, more than 5,500 people were killed in car accidents involving distracted drivers.

"Texting while driving creates a hazard. This measure helps to make our roads safer. A vehicle can be dangerous when it's not operated with the utmost of attention. If you absolutely have to text, pull over," said Senator Jack M. Martins, who supported the measure.