



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kenneth P. LaValle

## LaValle: Senate Passes Legislation to Strengthen Law on Text Messaging While Driving

KENNETH P. LAVALLE May 4, 2011

| ISSUE: **CRIME, TRANSPORTATION, DMV (DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES)**

New York State Senator Kenneth P. LaValle today co-sponsored and voted for 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.

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 Automobile Association of America (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 is unsafe and presents a danger not only to the offending driver and his passengers, but all those sharing the road with them,” said LaValle.

The bill was sent to the Assembly.