



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senate Passes 'Complete Streets' Legislation

JACK M. MARTINS June 20, 2011

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The New York State Senate today passed the “Complete Streets” legislation which would help make roadways safer for all who use them. The bill (S.5411A), by Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick) requires state, county, and local transportation agencies to consider roadway design features that increase the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists.

“This legislation will help make our roads safer for everyone. Complete Streets design principles have been proven to reduce fatalities and injuries,” said Senator Fuschillo, Chairman of the Senate’s Transportation Committee. “Taking them into consideration on future projects will greatly improve the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers. The Assembly should join the Senate in passing this legislation.”

“New York needs to act to implement better strategies to increase roadway safety to help protect all pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers,” Senate Majority Leader Dean G. Skelos said. “Complete Streets helps address this issue by requiring project planners throughout the state consider roadway features that will create safer communities.”

Complete Streets design principles are roadway design features that accommodate and facilitate safe travel by pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists of all ages and abilities. These features include sidewalks, paved shoulders suitable for use by bicyclists, bicycle lanes,

“share the road” signage, crosswalks, pedestrian control signalization, bus pull outs, curb cuts, raised crosswalks, ramps, and traffic calming measures designed to allow pedestrian and motor traffic to easily coexist.

Senator Jack M. Martins supported the legislation. "This will make roads safer for pedestrians. In my Senate District, there are some roads such as Hempstead Turnpike that can be dangerous for pedestrians. Some injuries and fatalities can be avoided, not only by motorists driving more carefully, but also by design features in roadways with the safety of pedestrians in mind," he said.

A Federal Highway Administration safety review found that streets designed with these features improve safety for all users, such as enabling pedestrians to cross busy roads in two stages, improving bicycle safety and reducing left-turning motorist crashes to zero.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), over 300 pedestrians were killed on New York’s roadways in 2009 -- more than 45 other states. Twenty-six percent of all traffic fatalities in New York State in 2009 involved pedestrians, which is more than double the national average.

Wantagh resident Sandi Vega, whose 14-year-old daughter, Brittany, was killed while walking across Sunrise Highway last September, has been a strong advocate for the Complete Streets legislation. Mrs. Vega said, "This law would help save lives, improve safety, and prevent tragedies. Saving even one family from the heartache and lifelong pain that comes with losing a loved one, which my family feels every day, will make this law well worth it. I can’t thank Senator Fuschillo and the state Senate enough for making our roads safer for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers."

The legislation would require all state, county, and local transportation agencies to consider Complete Streets design principles on all projects which receive both federal and state funding. The legislation was developed in consultation with all interested parties, including the New York State Department of Transportation, the Governor, the Assembly, county and town highway superintendents, and advocacy groups.

The legislation is also supported by a number of organizations, including AARP, Tri-State Transportation Campaign, the New York State Association of Town Superintendents of Highways, the New York State County Highway Superintendents Association, the Business and Labor Coalition of New York, and the New York Academy of Medicine.

AARP, in a memo supporting the legislation, stated that “safe and accessible roadways and sidewalks are a critical link in our transportation system and vitally important to access community services” and that the legislation would “bring more of a balance to our roads and make them safe for all users.”

Tri-State Transportation Campaign, in a memo supporting the legislation, stated that “relatively small design and capital investments can result in significant safety improvements in our communities.”

The legislation has been sent to the Assembly.