



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Stephen M. Saland

## Texting While Driving Law

STEPHEN M. SALAND July 13, 2011

| ISSUE: **CELL PHONES**

I made a promise to our community that I would fight to pass legislation that would make it easier for law enforcement to crack down on texting-while-driving offenses. I am pleased to let you know that Governor Cuomo has signed into law a tough texting and phoning-while-driving measure that would make the use of electronic gadgets behind the wheel a “primary” offense.

Federal data shows 16,000 deaths nationwide due to texting while driving. The huge increase in text messaging, 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. Passage of this law will ensure that drivers keep their eyes on the road and their hands on the wheel – a victory for all New Yorkers.

I have been fighting to strengthen the 2009 law which permitted police to ticket a driver for illegal texting only if they first committed another violation, such as speeding. This year the Senate Republicans working with Governor Cuomo, were able to get it done.

The new law, which includes texting messages, browsing the web, viewing or taking images and playing games on an electronic device, is effective immediately and carries up to a \$150 fine and two penalty points on a license.