



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael Gianaris

Senator Gianaris Applauds Effectiveness of New Driving Law

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Twice as many texting-while-driving tickets handed out this year than last year.

Queens, NY – Senator Michael Gianaris praised the effectiveness of a recently enacted driving law, which has led to double the number of drivers ticketed for texting while driving in August 2011 than in August 2010.

The Distracted Driving Bill makes the use of portable devices while driving a primary offense. Previously, using these devices while behind the wheel was a secondary offense and police could only stop motorists if they were committing another, primary offense – such as speeding or running a red light.

“Too often, serious accidents are a result of activities such as texting while driving,” Senator Gianaris said. “The Distracted Driving Bill forces drivers to be more attentive and allows police to more easily prevent violations before harm is done. It is clear that the diligent enforcement of this law has made our roadways safer and resulted in fewer accidents.”

Between January and June of this year, a monthly average of 427 distracted driving tickets were issued. In August, the first full month following the bill’s enactment, a total of 1,082 drivers were ticketed for texting-while-driving.

The law permits law enforcement officials to pull over drivers for using portable electronic devices such as cell phones, MP3 players, laptops or any device with a screen while their vehicle is in motion. It also increases the penalty for using a cell phone without a hands-free device.

The bill was passed in July 2011. Senator Gianaris voted in favor of the measure this legislative session.

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