



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie: Keep Eye Tests for Drivers

PATTY RITCHIE September 27, 2011

| ISSUE: [FAMILIES, TRANSPORTATION, HIGHWAYS, DMV \(DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES\)](#)

Says DMV Plan Will Reverse Gains in Road Safety

State Senator Patty Ritchie is today calling on the state DMV to abandon its plan to abolish vision tests for drivers, saying the move creates an unnecessary risk for motorists and will undo recent gains in road safety.

“New York has made great progress in making our roads safer, including a determined effort to crack down on dangerous and distracted driving,” said Senator Ritchie, referring to recent new laws against cell phone use, texting and aggressive driving.

“Safe driving requires attention and clear focus to know what’s ahead on the roadway—that’s why New York, and virtually every other state, has always required periodic eye tests for motorists,” said Senator Ritchie. “The vision test requirement—once every eight years—is a mild inconvenience for motorists that makes our roads safer. Eliminating it just doesn’t make sense.”

The state DMV announced it is abolishing the eye test requirement as part of its effort to push more motorists to renew their licenses online or by mail.

Under the old rules, motorists could take a simple eye test at state or county DMV offices, or submit an eye test performed by their own doctors. Now they will be required only to “self certify” that their vision meets state standards.

Senator Ritchie, who formerly served as the St. Lawrence County Clerk, said she witnessed dozens of cases of motorists who first discovered their eyesight had deteriorated when they

appeared at the county DMV to renew their licenses.

“These drivers only discovered they had a vision problem when they couldn’t pass the DMV eye test, and as a result, sought the vision care they needed, and helped preserve their own safety on the highway,” Senator Ritchie said.