



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Sen. Young Supports Legislation to Require Eye Exams for NY Drivers

CATHARINE YOUNG October 7, 2011

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ALBANY – While the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) continues to investigate the merits of allowing drivers to “self-certify” vision-tests, Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I – Olean) is questioning the legality behind the policy change and already has introduced legislation that would make vision tests mandatory.

DMV announced recently that it would no longer require eye exams for drivers wishing to renew their licenses. DMV unveiled a new Internet application they said would increase customer service and allow drivers to self-certify that they meet vision requirements, the same way they do with other medical issues.

Senator Young called the ill-conceived regulations that were hurriedly forced upon by DMV not only unsafe, but potentially illegal because they were enacted without public scrutiny and bypassed regular rulemaking procedures required by law.

In response to growing criticism regarding the new policy, Governor Cuomo has told DMV officials to place the measure on hold until further medical investigations can be completed.

“It is intolerable and possibly even illegal for DMV to have completely ignored the proper rulemaking process in order to push through this dramatic change without getting feedback of any kind from the public,” said Senator Young.

“I have talked to county clerks, doctors and law enforcement officials in my district who were ‘shell shocked’ by this announcement and very concerned they were not consulted. I am all for using technology and cutting red tape to increase customer service and save costs at the local level, but you can’t address such a fundamental safety issue without better clarity and transparency,” she added.

Senator Young has introduced legislation that would require motorists to either pass a vision test administered by the local DMV office or submit a report from an eye care professional when renewing a license. Under DMV’s change, customers would have had the option of self-certifying that they were able to read at least 20/40 vision or better in one or both eyes, with or without corrective lenses.

“We have over 11 million motorists in this state. I can’t imagine the chaos that would result if even a small percentage of those drivers who failed their tests were allowed out on the roads,” said Senator Young.

“This legislation will prevent DMV from allowing people who have vision problems from getting behind a wheel and posing a real threat to themselves and the community,” she said.