



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Eye Exam Not Optional For Driving

JAMES L. SEWARD October 7, 2011

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ONEONTA, 10/07/11 – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I – Oneonta) today announced he is co-sponsoring legislation requiring New York’s drivers to pass eye exams in order to renew their licenses. The legislation is in response to the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles’ rash plan to eliminate the eye exam requirement.

“Operating a motor vehicle requires several skills starting with accurate eye sight,” said Senator Seward. **“Dropping the eye exam requirement for drivers is a roadmap to disaster and that is why I**

am co-sponsoring legislation (S.5904) that would guarantee this essential safety measure is not kicked to the curb.”

In an effort to streamline services, the DMV recently announced that it would no longer require eye exams for drivers wishing to renew their licenses. DMV unveiled a new Internet application said to shorten waiting times and increase customer service throughout the state. The new system would have allowed drivers to self-certify that they met vision requirements the same way they do with other medical issues.

After elected officials, county clerks and medical leaders protested, Governor Cuomo put the brakes on the plan. An advisory group of health, safety and transportation experts will now review the latest procedures for vision testing, the policies of other states and the most cost-effective means of assuring the vision safety of New York State’s 11 million drivers, while providing the convenience of online transactions.

Senate bill 5904 would codify current DMV policy requiring renewal applicants to complete an eye test at a DMV office or submit a certification signed by a physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner or optometrist attesting that the applicant has adequate vision to operate a motor vehicle.

“I am pleased the DMV wants to cut red tape and I am supportive of responsible measures to accomplish that goal – dropping the eye exam is the wrong direction to take. Nobody wants to wait in a long line at the DMV, but it’s better than a funeral procession due to an avoidable tragedy,”

Seward concluded.