



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## Addabbo Pushes Package of Legislation to Ensure Safer Streets & Crack Down on Dangerous Drivers

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR January 31, 2012

**Queens, NY, January 31, 2012** -- Citing the serious need to protect both pedestrians and law-abiding motorists on New York streets, **NYS Senator Joseph Addabbo, Jr.** (D-Queens) is supporting a package of bills designed to crack down on those who flaunt laws against driving without a license, who refuse to accept responsibility for their crimes, and who put the lives of others at risk by driving while intoxicated.

As one step toward safer streets, Addabbo is sponsoring legislation (S.1271) which would significantly raise penalties, including higher fines and jail time, for driving with a suspended or revoked license. Aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle in the third degree would carry a fine of between \$500 and \$1,000; in the second degree, a motorist would pay between \$1,000 and \$5,000 and could possibly face up to 180 days in jail. In the first degree -- the most serious class E felony -- the unlicensed driver could face between one and four years behind bars. This legislation has been approved by the NYS Senate's Transportation Committee, and is now under consideration by the full Senate. "Many of my constituents spoke to me about this type of needed legislation and wanted me to introduce it--and I did," Addabbo stated.

In addition, Addabbo recently voted on the Senate floor to approve three other bills to ensure that motorists on New York roadways obey the law and aren't purposefully and knowingly endangering other people who share the streets, whether on foot or in their own motor vehicles.

The first bill (S.164C) to earn Addabbo's support would establish "Abigail's Law," in memory of a young girl who was struck and killed by an inexperienced driver who was being supervised by a parent under the influence of alcohol. Under the legislation, supervising drivers under the influence of drugs or alcohol could be charged with misdemeanor or felony crimes, depending on the level of their intoxication. "It's just common sense that if there is an inexperienced driver behind the wheel, the person in the passenger seat, who is there to teach and supervise, needs to be sober," said Addabbo.

The second bill (S.3188) the senator approved would allow the courts to suspend the driver's licenses of those who are charged with illegal possession of marijuana or alcohol, and who then fail to appear in court to answer the charge, pay mandated fines, or complete required alcohol awareness programs or community service. "Since these crimes don't carry any jail time, judges can't issue warrants to force offenders to

take responsibility for their actions,” the senator said. “But if offenders ultimately face the loss of their driving privileges, maybe they’ll be more inclined to come clean, pay their debts, and do what’s necessary to put their crimes behind them.”

The third bill (S.3452) to gain Addabbo’s support establishes the new crime of “aggravated reckless driving” to crack down on drivers who take particularly egregious risks on the road – whether by driving against traffic on purpose or when intoxicated, or by driving 30 miles over the posted speed limit while drunk, racing another vehicle, or weaving in and out of traffic. “Any and all of these behaviors represent, quite literally, accidents waiting to happen,” said Senator Addabbo. “People who think they have a right to ‘drive while being idiotic’ and who thoughtlessly threaten the health and welfare of others with their actions, need to be brought up short.”

The three bills supported by Senator Addabbo on the Senate floor have now gone to the Assembly for consideration.

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