



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

Senate Transportation Committee Holds Public Hearing on Distracted Driving

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. February 13, 2012

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The New York State Senate Transportation Committee, chaired by Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr., today held a public hearing on distracted driving examining the National Transportation Safety Board's (NTSB) December 2011 recommendations on distracted driving and exploring how New York State can better prevent distracted driving on its roadways.

“Distracted driving poses a danger to everyone on our roadways. New York State has greatly strengthened its distracted driving laws over the last several years, but we need to continue to examine how we can make our roads safer. This hearing gathered expert input about what steps New York State should consider taking to better prevent distracted driving and make our roads safer,” said Senator Fuschillo (R-Merrick).

Members of the Transportation Committee heard testimony from the following:

- Christopher Hart, Vice-Chairman, National Transportation Safety Board
- Barbara Fiala, New York State Department of Motor Vehicles Commissioner & Governor's Traffic Safety Committee Chair

- Superintendent Joseph D'Amico, New York State Police
- Jacy Good, a board member of FocusDriven and victim of a distracted driving crash
- John Corlette, Legislative Director, AAA New York
- Dr. Jim Hedlund, Principal, Highway Safety North and former National Highway Traffic Safety Administration official
- Wayne Weikel, Director of State Affairs, Auto Alliance
- Kevin Ro, Corporate Manager, Toyota Motor North America
- Alfred Vigna, Driver Education & Technology Teacher, New York State Driver Education Traffic Safety Association

Discussion at the hearing included, but was not limited to: whether New York State's current distracted driving laws should be strengthened; how enforcement of distracted driving laws can be enhanced; how New York State can better educate drivers about the dangers of distracted driving; and how current driver education requirements can be enhanced so that young drivers learn about the dangers of distracted driving at an early age.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, more than 15 people are killed and over 1,200 people injured every day in distracted driving crashes. Over 5,400 people were killed and an estimated 448,000 were injured nationwide in crashes involving distracted driving in 2009 alone, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The hearing was held at the State Legislative Office Building in Albany.