



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

Senator Fuschillo Votes to Prevent Distracted Driving Among Teenagers

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. March 1, 2012

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Legislation Would Prohibit Individuals Holding Learner's Permits from Talking on the Phone Behind the Wheel

Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick) announced that the New York State Senate recently passed legislation he cosponsored to help prevent distracted driving among teenagers. The legislation would ban anyone holding a learner's permit from talking on the phone while driving.

"Someone holding a learner's permit is supposed to be practicing how to safely operate a motor vehicle and learning the rules of the road. They can't do that if they're talking on a cell phone, even with a hands-free device. Eliminating this distraction will help ensure that these inexperienced drivers stay focused solely on the road ahead as they learn how to drive," said Senator Fuschillo, Chairman of the Senate's Transportation Committee.

New York State currently prohibits all drivers from using portable hand-held electronic devices and telephones. However, drivers are permitted to use mobile telephones with a hands-free device, such as a Bluetooth or headset.

The legislation approved by the Senate (S948A), sponsored by Senator Carl Marcellino (R-Syosset), would prohibit individuals holding a learner's permit from using any mobile telephone while driving, including hands-free. This would help ensure that these inexperienced drivers, most of whom are teenagers, are not further distracted while learning how to drive.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among teenagers, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Teen drivers ages 16-19 are four times more likely than older drivers to be involved in a crash.

Experts at a recent public hearing on distracted driving held by Senator Fuschillo testified that New York should consider total ban on cell phone use for beginning drivers. 30 other states and the District of Columbia have similar laws.

The legislation has been sent to the Assembly for consideration.