



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

## Senator Fuschillo Reminds Residents to Be Safe and Designate a Driver This July 4th

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. July 2, 2012

| ISSUE: **DRUNK DRIVING**

With the Independence Day holiday approaching, Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick) is reminding residents to be safe and designate a driver if they plan on drinking on July 4th.

“Many of us will celebrate the Fourth of July with family and friends at barbeques and parties. However, it’s important to remember to designate a driver if you plan on drinking. New York State’s DWI laws are among the toughest in the country. Don’t find that out the hard way. Be safe, be smart, and save a life; don’t drink and drive,” said Senator Fuschillo, Chairman of the Senate’s Transportation Committee.

Senator Fuschillo has authored a number of laws which raise penalties for drunk drivers. As a result, New York State has some of the nation’s strongest DWI laws. Among the penalties individuals could face for driving while intoxicated include:

- Up to 25 years in prison if they cause a crash in which someone is killed;
- Up to 15 years in prison if they cause a crash in which someone is seriously injured;
- Felony charges for driving while intoxicated with a child in the car;

- Felony charges if they have previous DWI convictions. In addition, anyone convicted of DWI is required to install and use an ignition interlock in all vehicles they own or operate. Ignition interlocks are breath test devices linked to a vehicle's ignition system which prevent the car from starting if alcohol is detected in the driver's breath.

Senator Fuschillo is reminding residents to follow a few safety tips to prevent drunk driving tragedies this Fourth of July:

- Plan a safe way home in advance;
- Designate a sober driver before you start drinking;
- If you're impaired, don't drive; use a taxi, call a sober friend or family member, or use public transportation;
- If you see someone about to drive drunk, do whatever you can to stop them; take their keys and help them make other arrangements to get home safely.
- If you see a drunk driver on the road, you can report them by calling 911.

Over 45,000 drivers were arrested for DWI in New York State in 2011, according to the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Service. Nassau and Suffolk County Police made more than 100 DWI arrests during last year's July 4th holiday weekend, according to Newsday.