Senate Passes Alix's Law

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| ISSUE: **CRIME**

Bill Would Make it Illegal for Driver to Leave Scene After Vehicle Hits Any Object

The New York State Senate today passed "Alix's Law", sponsored by Senator Patrick M. Gallivan (R-C-I, Elma), to close a legal loophole and hold intoxicated drivers accountable for leaving the scene of an accident.

The legislation (S1698A) responds to a drunk driving accident that killed a teenage girl in Amherst, Erie County. On July 8, 2011, 18-year-old Alix Rice was killed by a drunk driver as she road home on her longboard. The driver argued that he was not aware he had hit a person and he was acquitted on the felony charge of leaving the scene of an accident.

"Intoxicated drivers are arguably the most likely to flee the scene of an accident to avoid being caught driving under the influence, and due to their intoxication and diminished awareness, they are also the least likely to know if they have struck an object or a person,"

said Senator Gallivan. "This bill will close a dangerous loophole in the state's vehicle and traffic law, and give prosecutors the tools necessary to ensure that intoxicated drivers are held accountable for the tragic outcomes of their actions."

"It is terrible enough that some individuals choose to drink and drive, but compounding that crime by leaving the scene of an accident is absolutely unacceptable," Senate Republican Conference Leader Dean G. Skelos said. "Current law does not go far enough to address this issue, however, Alix's Law would fix it and trigger appropriate penalties for violators."

The current law only requires drivers to report an accident when they know or have reason to know the accident resulted in an injury or property damage. Under this loophole, drunk drivers are able to flee the scene of an accident they caused and later claim they did not know any injury or damage occurred.

Alix's Law would close that loophole so that drunk drivers are held responsible for leaving the scene of an accident.

The bill was sent to the Assembly.

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