



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

Senator Fuschillo Statement on Newly Announced Measures to Toughen Distracted Driving Penalties

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. May 31, 2013

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“The stronger distracted driving penalties announced today, along with legislation to toughen license sanctions for young and newly licensed drivers who text and drive, would build upon New York’s efforts to combat a problem which endangers the safety of everyone on the road.

The dangers of distracted driving are well known. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, distracted drivers are 23 times more likely to be involved in a crash than a non-distracted driver. Additionally, sending or receiving a text message takes a driver’s eyes off the road for an average of 4.6 second, the equivalent of driving the length of a football field at 55 miles per hour blindfolded. Raising the number of penalty points a driver receives on their license for a distracted driving offense from 3 to 5 will give drivers an additional incentive to put away their phone and focus on the road.

Teenagers are the least experienced drivers on the road, yet they are also the most likely to engage in distracted driving. A survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) found that in 2011, 45% of all students ages 16 and older reported to texting or emailing while driving at least once in the past 30 days. Newly proposed legislation to suspend the driving privileges of junior and newly licensed drivers who text and drive would reinforce the

message that a driver's eyes should be on the road, not their phone, when behind the wheel.

I applaud Governor Cuomo for his actions to strengthen New York's distracted driving laws and am pleased to support them."