



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

## Senator Fuschillo Reminds Families About the Dangers of Distracted Driving as Part of National Teen Driver Safety Week

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. October 18, 2013

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With this Sunday marking the start of National Teen Driver Safety Week, Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick), Chairman of the Senate's Transportation Committee, is reminding families about the dangers of distracted driving. National Teen Driver Safety Week, which this year runs from October 20th-26th, was established to help educate young people about the risks of distracted driving and the importance of practicing safe driving habits.

"Distracted driving greatly increases the chances that you will be involved in a car crash and seriously harm someone, including yourself. Teen drivers are both the most inexperienced drivers on the road and most likely to drive distracted; that's a dangerous combination. National Teen Driver Safety Week is another way to reinforce the message that distracted driving can kill and remind teens to keep their eyes on the road, not their cell phone, every time they get behind the wheel," said Senator Fuschillo.

Senator Fuschillo is also reminding families that teens face automatic license suspensions for committing a distracted driving offense. Under a law coauthored by Senator Fuschillo earlier this year, teens with a junior driver's license will have their license suspended for sixty days each time they commit a distracted driving violation. Teens and other newly licensed

drivers who commit a distracted driving offense within the first six months of receiving their regular driver's license face a sixty day license suspension for their first offense. Those who commit a subsequent offense within six months of having their license restored face a six month license suspension.

In each instance, the suspensions are in addition to any other applicable penalties. All drivers convicted of a distracted driving offense face 5 penalty points on their driver's license and monetary fines which could be as high as \$450.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens, according to the CDC. Teen drivers are three times more likely to be in a fatal crash, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Distracted drivers are 23 times more likely to be involved in a crash than a non-distracted driver, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation.

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.

Senator Fuschillo also encouraged parents to help support the effort by practicing safe driving themselves.

"Children are influenced by their parents; if they see their mother or father driving distracted, they will be more likely to do it too. Setting a good example is one of the best ways parents can help prevent their children from driving while distracted," Senator Fuschillo added.