



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## Senate approves bike safety legislation co-sponsored by O'Mara, who says new law locally would help honor memory of Matt Miller

THOMAS F. O'MARA June 19, 2014

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**Albany, N.Y., June 19**—The State Senate approved legislation last night, co-sponsored by Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C-Big Flats), to incorporate a “bicycle and pedestrian safety” component into New York State’s pre-licensing driver’s education and examination requirements.

The measure was approved with strong bipartisan support in the Senate, 58 to 1.

O'Mara first pledged his support for the legislation (S.6143/A.4194) at the “[Awareness Ride in Memory of Matt Miller](#)” in Elmira on Thursday, May 15th. Miller, 43, an Elmira Free Academy graduate, was struck head-on and killed by a left-turning motorist while riding his bike on

Hendy Creek Road in the town of Southport in late April. The motorist was ticketed for failure to yield.

The 6.2-mile memory ride was sponsored by Kingsbury's Cyclery in Elmira and was attended by over 200 area cyclists. The money raised by the event established a college fund for Miller's seven-year-old son, Holden.

"Matt Miller's tragic death has led the local cycling community to get behind this legislation and it's made all of us more aware than ever of the need for this action," said O'Mara, a member of the Senate Transportation Committee. "Making all drivers more aware of sharing the road with cyclists and pedestrians is the most effective way to make our roadways safer. It's a straightforward, common sense piece of legislation that could save lives and the Assembly leadership should approve it."

Action on the legislation now moves to the state Assembly, where it's sponsored by Assemblyman Walter Mosley (D-Brooklyn) and remains in the Assembly Transportation Committee. O'Mara said that he would join supporters of the legislation in pushing the Assembly to approve the legislation before adjourning this year's regular legislative session.

The legislation O'Mara co-sponsors would, if enacted, require the state Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to incorporate a "bicycle and pedestrian safety" component into the pre-licensing driver's manual and exam motorists are required to review and pass before obtaining a driver's license. Specific provisions of the new driver awareness and education component would include instruction on:

- > safely passing a cyclist on the road;
- > special considerations while driving in urban areas;
- > the definition and designation of bicycle lanes;
- > how to navigate an intersection with pedestrians and cyclists; and
- > exiting a vehicle without endangering pedestrians and cyclists.

According to the sponsors, the surge in cycling's popularity has, by some estimates, resulted in more than 200,000 bike riders taking to roadways daily.