



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Rich Funke

Senator Funke and Assemblyman Thiele Pass Bill to Put the Brakes on Hit-and-Run Offenders

RICH FUNKE June 16, 2015

Senator **Rich Funke** and Assemblyman **Fred W. Thiele, Jr.** (I-D-WF, Sag Harbor) today announced that the New York State Senate and New York State Assembly passed legislation they sponsored to crack down on hit-and-run drivers. Their bills, S.4747/A.5266, would establish the new charge of Leaving the Scene of an Incident without Reporting to deter drivers from fleeing the scene of serious accidents. Hit-and-run incidents are on the rise, as more offenders are leaving accidents that have resulted in injury or death to avoid punishment for other serious infractions, like driving while intoxicated or driving with a suspended license.

“Leaving the scene of a serious accident is all too often the coward’s way out of facing charges for driving drunk or without a valid license,” said **Funke**. *“This legislation would send a powerful message to hit-and-run offenders that there is no hiding from the law if you take a life or leave someone seriously injured as a result of your bad decisions. My thanks to Assemblyman Thiele and our colleagues in the Senate and Assembly for supporting this common-sense legislation.”*

“In Suffolk County, we have seen an incredible increase in the number of hit and run accidents,” said **Thiele**. *“We must do whatever we can to help prevent further injuries and deaths. I thank Senator Funke for his partnership and efforts to pass this bill in the Senate and urge the Governor to act quickly and sign our bill into law.”*

A driver would be guilty of the new crime if he or she engaged in reckless driving and left the scene of an accident resulting in death or serious physical injury either while: 1.) Knowing or having reason to know that his or her license is suspended or revoked; 2.) Driving while intoxicated (DWI) or while ability impaired (DWAI); or 3.) Having a prior conviction for leaving the scene of an accident or for DWI/DWAI. Aggravated Leaving the Scene of an Incident without Reporting would be a class C felony.

The crime is particularly egregious since a severely injured person's chance of survival is greatly diminished when medical care is delayed. Late last night a Newark man was hospitalized with leg and head injuries at after being struck on St. Paul Street in the City of Rochester by a driver who fled the scene.

The bill will be delivered to the Governor for consideration.