



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jose Peralta

Senator Jose Peralta calls for additional measures to improve street safety along Northern Boulevard

JOSE PERALTA December 15, 2015

State Senator Jose Peralta (D-East Elmhurst) urged the City's Department of Transportation (DOT) to take steps to improve road and pedestrian safety in and around the intersection of Northern Boulevard and Junction Boulevard in Queens. Senator Peralta noted that, in light of Tuesday's hit-and-run accident that killed a 17-year-old teenager, the City must implement additional safety measures, including the installation of more speed cameras in busy intersections along Northern Boulevard and the launch of a public campaign to educate the public about additional dangers they may face as pedestrians.

Senator Peralta, along with elected officials, community leaders and advocates called upon the hit-and-run driver to turn him/herself in.

Senator Peralta announced that he introduced legislation mandating that the DOT create a public awareness campaign relative to the dangers of being a distracted pedestrian (S.6266). Similar educational initiatives, such as Governor Andrew Cuomo's 'Don't Text and Drive' campaign, were aimed at alerting motor vehicle operators about the increased likelihood of traffic accidents due to distracted driving.

"The DOT is the City's expert on road and street safety, so they are best fit to orchestrate this public awareness campaign, so long as New Yorkers in all five boroughs get the message that

distracted walking is unsafe walking,” said Senator Peralta. “We can’t always protect the public against reckless drivers and their bad decisions, but we must ensure that we all work together to reduce the odds of pedestrians falling victim to unsafe motorists.”

Senator Peralta further urged the DOT to take action along Northern Boulevard by installing additional speed cameras. Northern Boulevard is a very busy corridor that cuts across the Borough. Under the City's Vision Zero Plan, the stretch of Northern Boulevard from 114th Street to 40th Road is now an ‘arterial slow zone,’ an action that reduced the local speed limit on the thoroughfare from 30 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour.

“We must take all steps necessary to ensure that tragedies like this don’t happen again,” added Senator Peralta. “I am very saddened about the hit-and-run that left Ovidio Jesús Jaramillo dead and his family completely devastated. As the parent of a teenager, I find the incident particularly horrifying. My thoughts and prayers are with Ovidio’s family.”

Ovidio Jesús Jaramillo was killed when he entered a crosswalk at the intersection of Northern and Junction Boulevards, and was hit by the driver of a black Toyota Camry at approximately 10:50 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 8th. In 2013, 3-year-old Jahir Figueroa was killed after being hit by a car in the same intersection.

According to the New York City Police Department, this year there have been 25 accidents in this intersection that left one person dead and eight injured. Between 2012 and 2015, the intersection was the scene of more than one hundred accidents that resulted in two people dead and more than 30 injured.

“Unfortunately, this heavily trafficked intersection is again the scene of a serious accident,” said Senator Peralta. “I urge the driver of car involved to turn him or herself in to the Police at once. If the public has any information regarding the hit-and-run, please let the

authorities know. As always, if you see something, say something.”

“I am saddened and heartbroken to learn of the tragedy that took place when young Ovidio Jaramillo was fatally struck by a vehicle on Northern Boulevard,” **said Rep. Joe Crowley (D-Queens, the Bronx)**. “As I join the rest of the community in expressing our deepest sympathies with Ovidio’s family, it’s important that we also honor his memory by doing all we can to make sure our streets are safer to cross and that reckless and irresponsible drivers are kept off our roads. I thank Senator Jose Peralta and all of the advocates for their commitment to keeping pedestrian safety a top priority in our community.”

“The death of Ovidio Jesus Jaramillo is a terrible tragedy that reminds us that the improvement of traffic safety must continue to be a top priority for our City,” **said Queens Borough President Melinda Katz**. “Too many of our City’s residents die needlessly on our streets and we must do more to prevent future fatalities.”

“My condolences to the family of the young man that was killed. I have been saying for years now the city of New York must change the lighting system so that when pedestrians are crossing the street all cars should have red lights and be fully stopped,” **said Assemblymember Michael DenDekker (D-East Elmhurst)**. “As for the driver, I suggest you turn yourself immediately, otherwise when you are caught, and you will be caught, this community will encourage that you are sentenced to the maximum allowed under current law. Senator Peralta and my Assembly Colleagues will continually work to make our streets safer but we more help from the City.”

“Ovidio Jaramillo should not have lost his life,” **said Assemblymember Francisco Moya (D-Jackson Heights)**. “It is in his name that we will fight for safer streets. It is my hope that the hit-and-run driver who caused Mr. Jaramillo’s death is found and that he is prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Traffic-related deaths are avoidable. It’s time for our streets to be

safe for all New Yorkers—pedestrians, drivers, and cyclists alike. As a strong supporter of Vision Zero, I have worked in Albany to bring more speed cameras to our streets and championed a reduced speed limit. I believe that safety must come first, so that no more lives are lost because of reckless drivers.”

Councilmember Julissa Ferreras-Copeland (D-East Elmhurst) noted, “I urge residents of Corona and Jackson Heights to be conscience of the speed limit as they drive on Northern Blvd and anywhere. Now more than ever, I ask this community to join me as I work with the Department of Transportation and NYPD to improve the safety of pedestrians, cyclist and drivers in our district. My heart goes out to Jaramillo's mother and grandmother. I can't imagine what it must be like to lose your only child.”

“At Make Queens Safer our deepest condolences go out to the family and friends of Ovidio Jaramillo, a teenager killed by a driver who then fled the scene of the crime. It is a horror and a outrage to leave a human being, in this case a high school student, on the street in this cowardly and cold-blooded fashion. Perhaps, had the driver who killed the boy stopped and immediately called 911, Ovidio Jaramillo would have survived,” said **Laura Newman, founding member of Make Queens Safer**. “We call for law enforcement to pursue traffic crimes, and particularly traffic killings, with the same justice-driven mission they employ when fighting other forms of violence in the community. A hit and run killing is a crime. A hit and run killer is a criminal. Traffic enforcement is law enforcement.”

“We hope that police will soon apprehend the driver who killed 17-year-old Ovidio Jaramillo and left the scene, so that Queens District Attorney Richard Brown can charge that driver to the full extent of the law,” said **Paul Steely White, Executive Director of Transportation Alternatives**. “We renew our call on Mayor de Blasio and NYPD Commissioner Bratton to come up with an action plan to deter the scourge of hit-and-run, which is widespread but almost never prosecuted.”