



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senator Martins: Senate Approves New Penalties for Leaving Children in Vehicles Unattended

JACK M. MARTINS March 21, 2016

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Senator Jack M. Martins (R-7th Senate District) announced that the New York State Senate passed legislation he sponsored to create new penalties for adults who leave children in vehicles unattended.

“Cars should not be used as babysitters. Leaving a young child inside an unattended vehicle is irresponsible, dangerous, and in some circumstances can lead to tragedy in a matter of minutes. Implementing these measures would create a new deterrent and reinforce the dangers of leaving young children alone in cars. The Assembly should join the Senate in approving them” said Senator Martins.

The proposed law (S241) would create fines for adults who leave a child under age eight unsupervised in a vehicle in conditions which knowingly or recklessly present a significant risk to that child’s health and safety. Higher fines would be allowed for repeat offenders.

The fines would be as follows:

- First offense: \$50 maximum fine
- Two offenses within 18 months: \$100 maximum fine

- Three or more offenses within 18 months: \$200 maximum fine

Fines would be in addition to any other applicable penalties imposed by the courts.

According to SafeKids.org, a national non-profit child safety organization, even on a mild 70 degree day, the temperature inside of a car can rise nearly 20 degrees in 10 minutes, and continue to heat up with each passing minute. As a result, car interiors can reach temperatures far exceeding those outside, even if the windows are cracked. A child's body heats up three to five times faster than an adults, making them especially vulnerable to heat stroke. Children also face the risk of hypothermia if they are left in cars in cold temperatures.

"KidsAndCars.org applauds Senator Martins for passing this important legislation. This bill is about prevention, not about punishing parents who leave their very young child alone in a vehicle for a few minutes. The law is meant to be a deterrent and ensure that parents understand that leaving a child in a vehicle alone is not ok. Dangers such a heatstroke, seatbelt strangulation, car theft and a child unbuckling and getting out of the car can suddenly turn a quick errand into a tragedy," said Sue Auriemma, a Manhasset resident and Vice President of KidsAnd Cars.org.

The legislation has been sent to the Assembly.