



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## In Wake of Tragic Accident, Senator Young Proposes Outlawing Deadly Guardrails

CATHARINE YOUNG March 28, 2017

| ISSUE: **TRANSPORTATION**

ALBANY – After a heartbreaking case in Tennessee that resulted in the death of a young woman originally from Fredonia, Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I- 57th District) has introduced [legislation](#) to ban the potentially dangerous guardrails in New York State.

In November 2016, Hannah Eimers, who was born on September 11, 1999 in Fredonia, was killed in a traffic accident in Tennessee when her vehicle left Interstate 75, crossed into the median and struck the guardrail. Tragically, instead of redirecting the car as it left the roadway, the guardrail penetrated the cabin of the car, killing Hannah instantly.

With the story returning to headlines recently, Hannah's family has raised concerns because the type of guardrail she struck continues to be used across the country, despite growing safety concerns.

"Our hearts go out to the Eimers family. Words cannot begin to express our sympathies. Losing a 17-year-old child is devastating, especially in such a tragic way. When I learned about the local connection to Hannah I immediately took action to help the family bring something positive out of their loved one's tragic passing. New York should be proactive so that a similar tragedy doesn't occur here," said Senator Young.

In response to the family's concerns, Senator Young has introduced new legislation, Senate Bill 5427, which would remove "X-Lite" guardrail products from the list of eligible types of materials used for guardrails in New York State, ban "X-Lite" and similarly designed products from being installed in the future, and require that any existing "X-Lite" guardrail products be replaced.

"This legislation is about ensuring the public's safety on the roadways. We are discovering that there are deathtraps on the sides of our roads. Guardrails are supposed to be designed to protect people from injury when there is an accident. You just can't cut corners when public safety is involved and this design is seriously flawed. Banning the use of this design will help keep everyone safe while honoring Hannah's memory. Everything that can be done to protect motorists should be done. If a product is known to be deficient, we should take steps to replace it and make sure municipalities and the state don't continue investing in the technology," she said.

Just two weeks prior to the accident, the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) decided to stop contracting for the "X-Lite" guardrails. Since the time of the crash, TDOT has also moved forward with contracting for the removal of a majority of the same guardrails that are currently in place.

Last month, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) also began the process of removing and replacing guardrail end terminals with similar designs and materials to the "X-Lite" guardrails involved in Hannah Eimers' case, amid concerns the products might fail in a head on crash. According to media reports, VDOT claimed they took the actions after reports about design flaws were raised and they performed their own internal investigations.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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## 2017-S5427

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
- 

Directs the commissioner of transportation to prohibit the use and installation of certain types of guardrails and rail caps on all state and local highways

March 28, 2017

In Senate Committee **Transportation**

Sponsored by **Catharine Young**

Do you support this bill?

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