CROCI AND SERINO LEAD SUCCESSFUL PUSH TO BAN SEX OFFENDERS FROM DRIVING FOR UBER AND LYFT

SUSAN SERINO   June 30, 2017

| ISSUE: **RIDESHARING**

ALBANY, NY — With ride-hailing officially allowed to make its way across the state today, a loophole in the law that could have allowed Level 1 sex offenders to drive for companies like Uber and Lyft has officially been closed, thanks to the tireless efforts of Senators Tom Croci (R, C, I—Sayville) and Sue Serino (R, C, I—Hyde Park).

Senator Tom Croci said, *"A gross oversight has been corrected. We must thoroughly screen individuals who are driving the people we care for. Ensuring sex offenders will not be behind the wheel of a vehicle*

driving New Yorkers is something I have been proud to fight to make happen."

"While I come from a community that stands to benefit greatly from the implementation of ride-hailing, public safety must always be our top priority," **said Senator Sue Serino.** *"To think that New York law could have allowed vulnerable community members to unknowingly get into the personal vehicle of a registered sex offender is incomprehensible. Today, I am proud to have played a role in closing this dangerous loophole and protecting the scores of New Yorkers who will undoubtedly be utilizing these services. I thank my colleagues for acting with a sense of urgency to ensure that our law keeps pace with this important technology."*

The lawmakers, along with their partners in the Assembly—Assemblymen Joe Lentol (D—North Brooklyn) and Dean Murray (R-C-I-Reform, East Patchogue)—introduced this important legislation following the passage of the state budget, which allowed for the expansion of ride-hailing in communities beyond New York City (NYC). However, their push took on a sense of urgency earlier this month following the passage of a bill that fast-tracked the implementation of ride-hailing with the goal of allowing these companies to operate ahead of the July 4th holiday.

Today—the first official day these companies have been allowed to operate beyond NYC—their bill aimed at significantly improving safety for the scores of consumers who will likely be utilizing these services throughout the holiday weekend, and beyond, was signed into law by the Governor and is slated to take effect immediately.

Legislative Background:

The law that was passed as part of this year's State Budget authorizing ride-hailing companies to operate beyond New York City requires potential drivers to obtain a Transportation Network Company (TNC) Driver permit. Individuals found on the U.S. Department of Justice National Sex Offender Public Website are expressly prohibited from receiving that permit. However, the database only lists those who are designated as Levels 2 and 3 sex offenders in New York, and omits those designated as Level 1 offenders.

As written, the law only prohibits the issuance of a TNC driver permit to those Level 1 offenders who have been convicted of a sex offense in the last seven years. However, the NYS Sex Offender Registration Act (SORA) requires that Level 1 offenders register with law enforcement for a 20-year period due to the continued risk they pose to our communities. As a result, the law allows Level 1 offenders to receive a permit—and drive members of the community around in their personal vehicles—a full thirteen years before they come off of the sex offender registry.

Specifically, the bill (S.6782)—sponsored by Croci and co-primed by Serino—closes this loophole by ensuring that a registered offender is expressly prohibited from receiving a TNC Driver Permit during the entire period that they are registered as a sex offender.

-30-

RELATED LEGISLATION

2017-S6782

- 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

-

Relates to criminal history of transportation network drivers and juvenile justice

June 16, 2017

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by Thomas D. Croci

Do you support this bill?