



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

Days After Bicycle Accident on Union Road Claims Life of Local Teen, Senator Kennedy and Assemblymember Wallace Urge NYS Department of Transportation to Study Busy Cheektowaga Intersection

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY August 3, 2018

| ISSUE: **SAFE STREETS**

With More Than 15,000 Vehicles Passing Through Union Road and Kensington Expressway Intersection Daily, State Legislators Pen Letter to NYSDOT, Asking Commissioner to Analyze Whether Pedestrian Safety Features Can Be Improved

Intersection is Located Near Large Shopping Plaza, Grocery Store, and Several Bus Stops; Kennedy and Wallace Stress Importance of Safe Streets

CHEEKTOWAGA, N.Y.— Senator Tim Kennedy (D-Buffalo) and Assemblywoman Monica Wallace (D-Cheektowaga) are urging the New York State Department of Transportation to study the safety of Union Road near the Kensington Expressway onramp in Cheektowaga. Their call comes after 16-year-old Sherilann Lorenz was struck by a car along this stretch of road Monday while riding her bike to work. She later died from her injuries. In their letter to the NYSDOT Commissioner, Kennedy and Wallace request that the Department of Transportation look into the safety features for pedestrians and bicyclists at and around the intersection, and that they take appropriate action if there is more that can be done to ensure the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists.

“Busy roads are a sign that our local economy and neighborhoods are thriving, but that success cannot come at the cost of a life,” said Senator Tim Kennedy. “As we mourn the loss of Sherilann Lorenz, we owe it to her family and the many who call Cheektowaga home to ensure that the state is doing everything on its end to make this intersection safe for pedestrians and cyclists. We’re urging the DOT to do the right thing by acting immediately, and analyzing whether further safety measures and traffic calming measures are needed.”

“The tragic accident earlier this week that led to the loss of a beautiful young life has left our community heartbroken,” said Assemblymember Monica Wallace. “Union Road is a major thoroughfare of which traffic is only increasing, especially at the intersection of the Kensington Expressway. As we mourn the passing of Sherilann Lorenz, we’re calling on the state Department of Transportation to take a fresh look at Union Road and evaluate options for it to become more friendly to pedestrians and motorists alike.”

The joint letter notes the fact that over 15,000 cars pass through this intersection daily. The intersection also sees a large number of pedestrians and bicyclists, as it is in close proximity to bus stops, restaurants, a grocery store, and a shopping plaza. Because of the high volume of pedestrians who use this intersection out of necessity, Kennedy and Wallace urged the NYSDOT to pay careful attention to this deadly spot.

The text of Senator Kennedy and Assemblywoman Wallace’s letter is below:

Dear Commissioner Karas:

We write in regards to serious safety concerns on Union Road, a state highway, near the Kensington Expressway in the town of Cheektowaga. Following the recent and tragic death of 16-year-old Sherilann Lorenz, a Cleveland Hill High School student who was crossing this stretch of road on her bicycle on her way to work when she was hit by a vehicle, we are

urging the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) to study the pedestrian and bicyclist safety features located near this intersection to determine if more can be done to make this road more secure.

This busy intersection is the meeting of a multi-lane, heavily trafficked roadway with an onramp to the Kensington Expressway, and approximately 15,000 vehicles cross it each day. In addition to the heavy automobile traffic, this stretch of road also sees a great deal of pedestrian traffic, with people frequently crossing to access a nearby shopping plaza, restaurants, and grocery store. Additionally, there are several bus stops within walking distance of this intersection, and travellers rely on safe roadways to get them to these local businesses. Due to the heavy vehicle and pedestrian traffic in the vicinity of this state highway, and in the wake of the most recent tragedy, we respectfully request that the DOT study what options are available to better protect pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers, and help prevent future accidents from happening.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter, and we look forward to hearing from you. Should you have any questions, or if we may be of assistance, please contact us in our district offices at (716) 826-2683 (Kennedy) or (716) 686-0080 (Wallace).

Sincerely,

Timothy M. Kennedy

Monica Piga Wallace

New York State Senator, 63rd District

New York State Assemblymember, 143rd District