



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

## Senate Passes Bills to Increase Limo Safety

JEFF BISHOP, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR January 14, 2020

| ISSUE: **LIMOUSINE SAFETY**



**ALBANY, 01/14/20** – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I/Ref-Oneonta) today announced senate approval of legislation to help increase safety for limousine passengers. The comprehensive package of bills is a direct result of the tragic limousine crash in the Town of Schoharie, which claimed 20 lives.

**“When individuals step into a limousine or similar vehicle there is an expectation of safety,”** said Senator Seward. **“The tragic limousine crash that occurred in Schoharie County on October 6, 2018 claimed 20 innocent lives and also shed a light on several disturbing trends that need to be**

**addressed. The comprehensive package of bills approved by the senate are a step in the right direction. We owe it to the victims and their families to take action to help prevent future tragedies.”**

Senator Seward co-sponsors eight bills approved today to increase overall safety of limousines and other for-hire vehicles. The measures will ensure drivers undergo drug and alcohol testing, create a state hotline for the public to report safety concerns, and allow the commissioner of the Department of Transportation to immobilize or impound a limousine with certain defects.

**“Following the crash in Schoharie, I spent time meeting with family members of victims, emergency responders who were called to the scene, and investigators who tasked with making some sense of what occurred. The consensus from all was that we needed to enforce our current laws and make meaningful revisions to truly improve limousine safety on our highways. These bills are a direct result of courageous input from people who know unimaginable grief and pain,”** Seward added.

Senator Seward is also continuing to discuss the need for highway improvements in Schoharie at the site of the October 6, 2018 limousine crash and along New York State Route 30. A special public meeting hosted by Senator Seward and Assemblyman Chris Tague will take place in the coming weeks to further explore safety concerns and possible solutions.

In 2019, the senate adopted the same package of the bills. Unfortunately, only one of the bills (S.5329) requiring higher insurance requirements for limousines, was signed into law. The rest of the package was not voted on by the state assembly.

This year, a three way agreement between the senate, assembly, and governor has been reached to ensure the balance of the bills will also become law.

**“We cannot wait for another tragedy. The time is now to update our laws, enforce those already on the books, and improve limousine safety on New York’s highways,”** Seward concluded.

The senate bills adopted today include:

S.6185 – creates a state hotline, website, and phone app for public reporting of limousine safety concerns;

S.6186 – relates to drug and alcohol testing for for-hire vehicle drivers;

S.6187 – requires stretch limousines to use global positioning system (GPS) technology;

S.6188 – relates to the punishment for certain traffic infractions committed by certain limousine operators including making a U-turn on a public highway;

S.6189 – establishes the passenger safety task force on safety for passengers transported by stretch limousines;

S.6191 – requires safety belts, roll-over-protection devices, and push out windows for limousines;

S.6192 – requires limousine drivers to hold a commercial driver's license;

S.6193 – allows the commissioner of the Department of Transportation to immobilize or impound a limousine with certain defects.