



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David Carlucci

Carlucci, Mosley & Advocates Call For Passage of Bill Requiring Passengers Wear a Seat Belt in the Back Seat

SENATOR DAVID CARLUCCI February 11, 2020

| ISSUE: **PASSENGER SAFETY LEGISLATION**



(Albany, NY) – Today, Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland/Westchester), Assemblyman Walter Mosley (D-Brooklyn), AAA New York State, a backseat crash survivor, and a trauma surgeon appealed to the New York State Legislature for the need to pass legislation (S.4336/A.6163) quickly, requiring passengers buckle up in the back seat. The legislation would also apply to passengers of ride sharing services like Uber and Lift.

According to AAA New York State, an unbelted rear seat belt passenger in a vehicle accident is 2 times more likely to be killed, 8 times more likely to be seriously injured, and 2 times more likely to kill a front seat occupant by becoming a projectile. In New York State, over the last decade, 289 people have been killed, and 25,596 people have been injured, while unrestrained in the back seat of a motor vehicle. It is a common misconception by many adults that they do not have to wear their seat belt in the backseat because it is safer. According to a survey by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, 28 percent of people do not buckle up in the backseat.

“We want to save lives and prevent tragedies,” **said bill sponsor Senator David Carlucci.** “No matter where you sit in a vehicle, let’s make it habit to buckle up. The injuries you could sustain from not wearing a seat belt could be life altering as we so bravely heard from Laura Casellini. Thank you to the advocates, including AAA, for their support of this legislation and to Assemblymember Mosley for working diligently with me to get this bill signed into law.”

“Too many of the deaths we see on our roads are preventable,” **Assemblymember Mosely said.** “Since 1985, more than 1,500 adults have lost their lives for failure to wear their seat belt in the backseat. Because of this legislation, many families will be able to avoid the tragedy and heartbreak that over 1,500 families could not. We thank the advocates for their steadfast support of the bill, requiring seat belts no matter a person’s age or seat in a car will save lives. I am proud to have sponsored legislation that will help protect and keep New Yorkers safe.”

In 1985, New York became the first state in the nation to require drivers and all front-seat passengers wear a seat belt. However, in the backseat only minors under 16 must buckle up, and drivers can be ticketed \$50 upon first violation. Under this new bill, the fine remains the same for the driver if a minor is not buckled up, but if an adult is not wearing their seat belt in the backseat, he or she also faces a \$50 fine.

Laura Casellini suffered catastrophic injuries in a 2011 vehicle crash, just days after graduating from high school, when a drunk driver hit the vehicle she was in. Casellini explained she did not have her seat belt on in the back seat. She sustained skull fractures, a broken neck, a lacerated kidney, pelvic fractures, and severe traumatic brain injuries.

“I was in a coma for 4 months, on a feeding tube for many months,” **said Laura Casellini.** “I had to learn everything all over again, how to use my hands, how to eat, how to talk, how to walk. I was in the hospital and rehab for a year, but I survived. Because of the crash, I will always live with a brain injury. I want New York State to pass the seat belt law for everyone, no matter what seat you are in. I know the Legislature and Governor Cuomo will do the right thing and get this bill passed this year, before anyone else has to suffer the way I did.”

Dr. Kurt Edwards, Chief of Trauma and Critical Care at Albany Medical Center said, “I want to thank Senator Carlucci and Assemblyman Mosley. I also want to thank Laura Casellini who was taken care of by one of my colleagues. The perseverance and dedication to come out here and survive the injury that she sustained is pretty incredible, and what makes my job incredible is to see someone like her make it through and come here speak to you. Seat belts for back seat passengers is a simple way to save lives. I have seen enough people injured and seriously injured who did not have a seat belt on in the back seat. Regretfully there are a lot who haven’t made it to my trauma center because they didn’t live because they didn’t have their seat belt on in the back seat. Let’s make it purposeful and a law for people to wear a seat belt in the back seat because it doesn’t cost anything and will save lives.”

AAA New York State, spearheaded support for the bill, garnering 26 organizations representing traffic safety, public health organizations, health care professionals and the insurance industry to sign on with AAA to support a rear seat belt requirement. Supporters included advocates for Highway Safety, American College of Surgeons, American Academy of Pediatrics, FASNY, NYS Nurses Association, and NYU Langone Health.

“Our current seat belt laws leave teens and young adults most vulnerable,” **said AAA New York State's Government Affairs Representative, Lauren Paterno.** “New York has an opportunity to save lives and prevent further injuries on our roadways. It is time for New York to join 30 other states by passing a rear seat belt requirement.”

RELATED LEGISLATION

2019-S4336

- 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

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Relates to providing that no person sixteen years of age or over shall be a passenger in the back seat of a motor vehicle, unless such person is restrained by a safety belt

March 07, 2019

Senate Floor Calendar

Sponsored by **David Carlucci**

Do you support this bill?