



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew Gounardes

Senator Andrew Gounardes Introduces New Safe Streets Legislation Package

ANDREW GOUNARDES February 28, 2020

| ISSUE: **STREET SAFETY, RECKLESS DRIVING, PEDESTRIAN SAFETY, DOT**

Brooklyn, NY -- Following the deaths of 6 pedestrians in 5 days, including 2 Brooklyn schoolchildren and a hit-and-run in Bensonhurst, Senator Andrew Gounardes, joined by elected officials and advocates, today announced a new package of street safety legislation designed to protect New Yorkers from traffic injuries and deaths. They were also joined by the family of Jose Contla, the 26-year-old man killed in this week's hit-and-run collision in Bensonhurst. They also urged the passage of Gounardes' previously introduced street safety bills in this year's legislative session. In the 2019 legislative session, Gounardes successfully passed an expansion of the school zone speed camera program together with Assemblymember Deborah Glick.

2019 was a deadly year in Brooklyn and across New York City for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers alike. Traffic deaths rose to 219 in New York City in 2019 -- the first rise in years. This represented a roughly 9% increase in fatalities overall and a staggering 200% increase in cyclist fatalities. 74 people, the most of any borough, were killed in Brooklyn. There were 7,916 collisions with injuries in Brooklyn South, the highest of any patrol borough in the City.

The three bills introduced today were as follows:

The Dangerous Driver Act to clarify vehicle and traffic law to make it easier for dangerous drivers to be charged by District Attorneys. The bill clarifies that dangerous driving that causes an injury to another person does not need to require that the individual was aware of the harm they would cause or a minimum number of violations. Previously, the law had been interpreted otherwise, causing the vast majority of reckless drivers to avoid charges. This bill is sponsored in the Assembly by Assemblymember Dan Quart.

S7875, to expand pedestrian rights by deeming every intersection, marked or unmarked, to be a crosswalk. This common-sense measure has been adopted in multiple other states including Oregon, Washington and Georgia, and has been shown to increase driver awareness and reduce pedestrian injury and death.

S7876, to create a pedestrian safety rating of all vehicles based on how likely these vehicles are to cause injury or death to others on the road. This bill is sponsored in the Assembly by Assemblymember Nily Rozic.

Gounardes also urged the passage of previously introduced bills:

S3470 to prevent drugged driving, sponsored in the Assembly by Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal.

S5226A to require a written exam upon license renewal and S5228A to include understanding of pedestrian and cyclist safety as part of the pre-licensing course for drivers, sponsored in the Assembly by Assemblymember Felix Ortiz.

“In 2019, New Yorkers of every age and from every walk of life were devastated by traffic violence in 2019. Their families were forever torn apart because of our City’s inability to keep its people safe in our streets. Just this week, we lost 26-year-old Jose Contla, 10-year-old Patience Albert and 7-year-old Payson Lott. In memory of those we lost, we must do

everything in our power to make our streets safe for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers alike,” said **State Senator Andrew Gounardes**. “It’s time to say goodbye to the days when drivers, no matter how reckless and careless, could injure and kill our neighbors with impunity. It’s time for every single person to feel safe walking down the street.”

“Safer roadways undoubtedly lead to stronger communities, and it's imperative that New York prioritize walkable, secure streets,” said **Senator Tim Kennedy, Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee**. “Every child walking to school deserves to get there safely and get an education; every employee cycling to work deserves a clear route to achieve the American Dream. At its core, this is about the safety, mobility and convenient access of all roadway users. I applaud Senator Gounardes for championing these important reforms, and for putting the safety of New Yorkers first.”

“Riding your bike to work shouldn’t be a risky endeavor but in New York City, we know it often is,” said **Assemblymember Dan Quart**. “While it is important we expand the network of separated bike lanes, we must also finally start holding drivers accountable for dangerous behavior on the road. Though our bill changes just one word in statute, it will make a big difference in the courtroom.”

"With rising pedestrian and cyclist fatalities across the country, it is past time for action," said **Assemblywoman Nily Rozic (D, WF-Flushing)**. "As a matter of consumer protection and public safety, we must ensure that vehicle safety evaluations factor in safety for all New Yorkers--not just the vehicle's passengers so that our streets are safe for all."

“With traffic violence continuing to take the lives of New Yorkers, we must work to improve street safety. I appreciate Senator Gounardes’ sustained focus on protecting pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists, and I look forward to our continued collaboration on street safety legislation,” said **Assemblymember Deborah J. Glick**.

“The culture of impunity for dangerous drivers must end,” said **Assemblymember Mathyde Frontus**, who lost a close family friend to a hit-and-run driver in Brooklyn in January.

“Drivers do not own the roads. Our streets are made for cars, pedestrians, and cyclists. The law needs to be changed to make sure our streets are safe for all New Yorkers.”

Assemblymember Frontus is working on a bill to impose additional penalties on hit-and-run drivers.

“Each time we lose a neighbor to traffic violence yet another family is torn apart and another community is devastated. To end the culture of dangerous driving in New York we have to reorient our streets to prioritize pedestrian safety and hold drivers accountable for reckless behavior that puts their neighbors lives at risk. I’m grateful for Senator Gounardes’ leadership to ensure that every New Yorker can walk down the street in safety,” said **Councilmember Brad Lander**.

“Senator Gounardes and I have been focused on improving street safety for many years – long before we were both elected to office – because it's not only about addressing particular corners or corridors that need attention but about having a real, honest discussion about a dangerous car culture where, to some, pedestrians are merely obstacles. And that conversation, until very recently, was not happening around here. But now, with Senator Gounardes leading the charge, we have a team of local elected officials who refuse to turn a blind eye to this problem. People should feel safe while crossing the street and for far too long, aggressive and reckless driving has gone unchecked. We are 100% dedicated to improving the safety, mobility and livability of our streets so they can be shared and enjoyed by all,” said **Councilmember Justin Brannan**.

“Senator Gounardes’ package of bills aims to accomplish so many important goals on our streets, from stopping dangerous drivers from getting behind the wheel, to raising awareness of the dangers posed by cars and oversized SUVs,” said **Transportation Alternatives Deputy**

Director Marco Conner. “In an age where traffic fatalities are sadly trending upward, more elected leaders ought to be doing everything in their power to ensure that not only our streets, but also our vehicles and the people driving them, are as safe as possible. We are immensely grateful for Senator Gounardes setting a new standard for what safety means, not just for New York, but a new standard for the nation, and we look forward to support this effort.”

"Six pedestrians have been killed this week — two were children who were killed in Brooklyn. A total of 39 New Yorkers have been killed in crashes so far this year. This is an epidemic," said **Debbie Herdan, Crash Survivor and member of Families for Safe Streets, Brooklyn, NY.** "I am one of the 'lucky ones.' I was injured in a crash four years ago — one of several thousand that year to suffer a serious injury. I work at Maimonides Hospital which serves so many crash victims. This is an epidemic that requires a multi-faceted approach. Gounardes' bills are truly innovative — the pedestrian rating system will be the first in the nation, the need to send a message to drivers who kill and seriously injure is long overdue, and the DMV has long failed to take its role seriously, so the two changes to DMV education are a good first step. Senator Gounardes bills will help us make street safety a priority and protect all New Yorkers. The Senator is once again leading the fight for safe streets in Albany.”

“Senator Gounardes’ proposed legislation is a critical component in combatting pedestrian fatalities on our streets,” said **Maureen Landers, BRAKES co-founder.** “Together with road design and enforcement, these bills are common sense steps to combat reckless driving. As a resident of Bay Ridge, whose family has now twice been personally injured by reckless drivers, I welcome these life saving initiatives.”

“Andrew Gounardes has had a laser focus on making streets safer from his first day in the State Senate, and StreetsPAC is proud to stand with him as he continues to push for

common-sense laws that will save lives. This package of legislation tilts the balance of safety on our streets toward those who need it most. These bills defining dangerous driving, giving pedestrians the legal right of way in any intersection, striped or not, and creating a safety rating for those on the outside of vehicles as well as the people inside them, will all help protect our most vulnerable street users. We also urge the legislature to act on the safety-oriented bills that Senator Gounardes introduced last year to improve the Department of Motor Vehicles' licensing and renewal processes. When it comes to driving in New York State, safety must be preeminent," said **Eric McClure, StreetsPAC**.

"Older New Yorkers are consistently killed at the highest rates by dangerous drivers. AARP supports Senator Gounardes' new bills to crack down on perpetrators and protect pedestrians. We're working to make New York City and all communities better and safer places for people of all ages to live, and key to that goal is our ability to walk safely in our neighborhoods," said **Beth Finkel, State Director of AARP New York**.

"Street safety has been a focus of the disability community since we organized in the 1970s. Sometimes the best way to cross the street is through the Legislature. Thanks to Senator Gounardes, we will be making important steps towards the goal of simply being able to cross the street safely," said **Susan M. Dooha, Executive Director of the Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY (CIDNY)**. Dooha said that street safety is also a personal issue for her--she acquired her disability when she was hit by a car while crossing the street. Dooha said, "Every move we make to create safer streets and sidewalks is a step in the right direction. This is especially true for people with disabilities."

It is a clear sign that the normalization of careless and reckless driving continues to thrive in our city when people riding bicycles are given more summonses than people driving trucks, especially in a year that saw a 9% increase in the number of people killed by a motor vehicle when walking and a 200% increase in the number of people killed when riding a bicycle. We

must continue to raise awareness and implement measures to prevent the loss of life due to nonsensical carelessness on our streets. We have to shift policy. We have to disrupt current norms: driving with a suspended license is not acceptable, speeding is not acceptable, rolling past a stop sign is not acceptable, running a red light is not acceptable. The mandatory retesting of drivers upon license renewal, redefining dangerous driving, mandatory education on pedestrian and cyclist safety, and understanding the particular dangers of driving large-sized vehicles on city streets are some simple, simple, steps to prevent serious injury or death. We support these measures. We are here to fight for them to get passed in Albany,” said **Angela Azzolino, Executive Director, Get Women Cycling.**

###

RELATED LEGISLATION

2019-S7875

- 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 redefining the term crosswalk to include an unmarked portion of the roadway

February 27, 2020

In Senate Committee [Transportation](#)

Sponsored by [Andrew Gounardes](#)

Do you support this bill?

2019-S7876

- 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
-

Creates a pedestrian safety rating system for motor vehicles

February 27, 2020

In Senate Committee [Transportation](#)

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Do you support this bill?

2019-S3470

- 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 drugged driving

February 07, 2019

In Senate Committee [Transportation](#)

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Do you support this bill?

2019-S5226A

- 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 requiring a written exam upon renewal of a driver's license

April 17, 2019

In Senate Committee [Transportation](#)

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Do you support this bill?

2019-S5228A

- 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 requiring instruction in pedestrian and bicyclist safety as part of the drivers pre-licensing course

April 17, 2019

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by **Andrew Gounardes**

Do you support this bill?