



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara signs on to co-sponsor bike safety legislation, says new law locally would help honor the memory of Matt Miller (Updated, May 29th)

THOMAS F. O'MARA May 28, 2014

| ISSUE: **DMV (DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES)**



[Updated, May 29, 2014: Read and watch more in the *Star-Gazette*, **WETM-TV**, and **WENY-TV**]

Elmira, N.Y., May 28—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C-Big Flats) is co-sponsoring legislation in the Senate to incorporate a “bicycle and pedestrian safety” component into New York State’s pre-licensing driver’s education and examination requirements.

"The most effective way to protect the safety and lives of cyclists on New York State’s roadways is to make drivers more aware that they’re sharing the road with cyclists and pedestrians,” said O’Mara, a member of the Senate Transportation Committee. “This is a straightforward, common sense piece of legislation that could save lives. The tragic death locally of Matt Miller in April has made the local cycling community and all of us more aware than ever of the need for this action. I’ll be pushing for it to become law before the end of

this legislative session.”

O'Mara first pledged his support for the legislation (S.6143/A.4194) at the “[Awareness Ride in Memory of Matt Miller](#)” in Elmira on Thursday, May 15th. Miller, 43, an Elmira Free Academy graduate, was struck head-on and killed by a left-turning motorist while riding his bike on Hendy Creek Road in the town of Southport in late April. The motorist was ticketed for failure to yield.

The 6.2-mile memory ride was sponsored by Kingsbury's Cyclery in Elmira and was attended by over 200 area cyclists. The money raised by the event established a college fund for Miller's seven-year-old son, Holden.

The legislation O'Mara co-sponsors would, if enacted, require the state Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to incorporate a “bicycle and pedestrian safety” component into the pre-licensing driver's manual and exam motorists are required to review and pass before obtaining a driver's license. Specific provisions of the new driver awareness and education component would include instruction on:

- > safely passing a cyclist on the road;
- > special considerations while driving in urban areas;
- > the definition and designation of bicycle lanes;
- > how to navigate an intersection with pedestrians and cyclists; and
- > exiting a vehicle without endangering pedestrians and cyclists.

The measure has been referred to the transportation committees in both the Senate and Assembly. It must be approved by both houses of the Legislature and signed into law by the governor before becoming law.

According to the sponsors, the surge in cycling's popularity has, by some estimates, resulted in more than 200,000 bike riders taking to roadways daily.