



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senator Martins: Stronger Penalties for Drivers Who Kill or Injure Someone While Driving WITH a Suspended or Revoked License Passed by Senate

JACK M. MARTINS May 27, 2015

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Senator Jack M. Martins (R-7th Senate District) today announced that legislation he sponsored to strengthen penalties for individuals who kill or injure someone while driving with a suspended or revoked license has been passed by the New York State Senate.

Senator Martins said, "Driving is not a right; if you've lost the privilege of holding a driver's license, you can't get behind the wheel, period. That someone can ignore the law, drive illegally, kill or injure someone else, and only face a maximum penalty of a misdemeanor is unconscionable. Families whose hearts are broken forever because their loved one was killed by an unlicensed driver should not have to endure the added pain of watching that driver walk away with a slap on the wrist. Unfortunately, that is what's happening right now, and it needs to stop. I urge the Assembly to join the Senate in passing this legislation to give law enforcement stronger tools to hold these criminals accountable and keep them off the streets."

Senator Martins' legislation (S4649A) would create felony charges for individuals who kill or injure someone while driving with a suspended or revoked license. These drivers would face up to four years in prison if they cause serious injury to another person and up to seven years in prison if they take someone's life.

Under current law, people driving with suspended or revoked licenses who kill or injure someone face only misdemeanor charges carrying a maximum sentence of 180 days in jail.

Acting Nassau County District Attorney Madeline Singas, who worked with Senator Martins in drafting the legislation, said, "Today we are one step closer to bringing justice to families victimized by drivers who never should have been on the road in the first place. I am grateful to Senator Martins and the Senate for their quick passage of this essential legislation. We now look to our colleagues in the Assembly to do the same and present the bill to the Governor for his signature."

The legislation comes in response to several recent incidents on Long Island where unlicensed drivers caused tragedies. Last December, 12 year old Zachary Ranftle was killed in Valley Stream by a driver alleged to have been driving with a suspended license. Last March, a driver with a suspended license seriously injured an innocent bystander when he crashed into a Farmingdale restaurant after allegedly fleeing the scene of an accident.

The legislation has been sent to the Assembly.