



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John C. Liu

## Legislators, advocates celebrate passage of Sammy's law, Call for swift action in NYC

JOHN C. LIU April 30, 2024

| ISSUE: **SAMMY'S LAW**, **ALLISON HOPE LIAO**, **SENATOR LIU**, **LOWERING SPEED LIMIT**



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**Flushing, NY** - State Senator John Liu today joined with legislators, street safety advocates and victims of traffic violence in celebration of the passage of Sammy's Law and to call for its swift implementation in NYC.

Sammy's Law authorizes the City of New York to reduce its own speed limits from 25 mph to 20 mph and from 15 mph to 10 mph in special traffic-calming zones, or "slow zones." Roads outside Manhattan with at least three lanes in a single direction will stay at 25 mph. The legislation was included in the recently passed FY25 state budget.

**Reports** indicate the first quarter of 2024 is the deadliest since the implementation of Vision Zero in 2014. This year 60 people were killed from traffic crashes. Queens recorded the highest number of fatalities at 37 percent of those killed in traffic this year.

Decreasing speed limits exponentially increases the likelihood of survival in the event of an accident. Since implementing the **Neighborhood Slow Zone program**, which reduces speed limits to 20 mph in certain areas, the city saw a 14% reduction in crashes with injuries and a 31% reduction in all vehicle related injuries.

Sammy's Law was named after 12-year-old Sammy Cohen Eckstein, who was killed by a driver in 2013 in Brooklyn. Advocates gathered today at Allison Hope Liao Way, the corner of Main Street and Cherry Avenue in Flushing, where another child, 3-year-old Allison Hope Liao was killed by a distracted driver in 2013.

**State Senator John Liu** stated, "Too many lives have been lost to traffic violence, including those of young children, because our laws do not protect them. Sammy Cohen Eckstein, Allison Hope Liao, Quintas Chen, Bayron Palomino Arroyo, and too many others were all young lives full of promise who were unfairly taken too soon. In a big city like New York, drivers need to slow down. The passage of Sammy's Law this month is a testament to their legacies, and we now call on the City of New York to act with the same urgency and implement these changes so no more families have to endure the heartbreak of losing a loved one to preventable traffic violence."

**State Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal, lead sponsor of Sammy's Law,** stated, "Sammy's Law is a game changer for street safety because it will finally allow New York City to set its own speed limits. In 2020, I introduced this common-sense traffic safety legislation in memory of Sammy Cohen Eckstein, a young man who was fatally struck by a speeding driver just months before his thirteenth birthday. Since Sammy's tragic death, his mother Amy Cohen has been a relentless champion for street safety through the organization she co-founded, Families for Safe Streets, and has inspired dozens of other family members who've lost loved ones to traffic violence to advocate for new traffic policies to save lives. New Yorkers owe them a deep debt of gratitude for helping change the paradigm of traffic safety in Albany."

**State Assemblymember Jessica González-Rojas** stated, "I am elated at the passage of this bill. It has been a long time coming and hard fought on every level. There is still more work to be done, but what we have accomplished thus far is incredible progress. Families, like that of 7-year-old Dolma Naadhun who was struck and killed by a vehicle while crossing the street with her mother, have experienced unimaginable pain of losing loved ones due to traffic violence. We've marched alongside each other in the streets, attended hearings and rallies to get this bill passed. I'm proud of the work we've done and the families that showed up and advocated for this bill. I am grateful that Sammy's Law will improve the safety of our streets."

**Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr.** stated, "It's long past time we take back our streets from speeding drivers and deliver justice to the grieving families of Sammy Cohen Eckstein, Allison Hope Liao, Quintas Chen, Bayron Palomino Arroyo, and too many others. That's exactly what the long overdue passage of Sammy's Law, allowing New York City to finally set its own speed limits, will help us do. I couldn't be more grateful for the tireless advocacy of groups like Families for Safe Streets, who have turned their pain into progress, and for the work of all our elected partners to get this badly needed bill passed into law."

**Amy Tam Liao, mother of Allison Hope Liao and founder of Families for Safe Streets,** stated, “Reduced speed limits save lives - and Sammy's Law will protect countless New Yorkers from traffic violence. Finally, New York City will be able to set its own speed limits. When I lost my daughter, Allison, the loss tore a hole in my family, my neighborhood, and my community. Every day, I remember her laughter and her spirit, taken from us far too soon. We must protect our youngest and most vulnerable from traffic violence, and Sammy's Law must be implemented immediately and appropriately.”

**Wayne Ho, President and CEO of the Chinese-American Planning Council** stated, “The Chinese-American Planning Council celebrates the passing of Sammy's Law in the state budget. This is a testament to our shared dedication to safety and equity for our communities. We thank the Governor's Office and State Legislature for prioritizing the well-being of children, youth, and their families.”

**Mazeda Uddin, CEO of South Asian Fund For Education Scholarship and Training Inc.,** stated, “Being a part of the SAFE Coalition makes me proud to stand for Safe Streets. If the 20 Mile speed limit was passed before 2013 many others could be saved like Sammy, Mohammed Saad, Nazmul Ahsan, and many others. Thanks to all of our NY State representatives including NYS Governor Hochul for their hard work.”