



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Frank Padavan

Padavan, Senate Majority Introduce Legislation to Crackdown on Street Racing

FRANK PADAVAN May 12, 2008

In response to two deadly accidents caused by suspected drag racing in New York State in just one day, members of the New York State Senate Task Force on Critical Choices have introduced legislation to increase penalties for illegal drag racing.

Last week, five-year-old Jordan McLean of Queens was thrown from his aunt's SUV and killed after their vehicle was struck by suspected drag racers. Jordan and his aunt, Claris Edwards, were driving on 109th Avenue in Queens -- a drag racing hot spot -- when they were faced with two cars head on. After colliding with one car, the other drove off and did not return, while the passengers of the car that hit them fled the scene and have not been located by police.

Also last week, a young man and woman were killed when their car crashed into a utility pole in a suburb of Buffalo. Police suspect they were involved in a drag race at the time of the accident.

"We need to do everything we can to keep our streets safe from people who would use them for street racing," Senator Frank Padavan (Queens) said. "The accident last week was a tragic and senseless loss of a young life and the driver must be caught and punished to the fullest extent of the law. This bill would specifically address the crime of street racing to stop

people from putting other lives at risk.”

The bill (S.8020) would increase the penalties for street racing from a misdemeanor offense to a felony for repeat offenders.

“This is an absolutely horrible - and completely preventable - tragedy,” said Senator Serphin R. Maltese, a tough former prosecutor and Deputy Chief of the Homicide Bureau. “These daredevils jeopardize the lives of innocent people every time they get behind the wheel and race on our public streets. It is unconscionable and they should be held accountable.”

“These tragic deaths are only the latest illustration that street racing puts peoples’ lives in danger,” Senator Andrew Lanza (R-I, Staten Island), sponsor of the bill said. “Innocent people are being killed at the hands of thrill-seeking drivers. My bill would increase penalties to deter these reckless individuals from putting peoples’ lives in jeopardy.”