



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Owen H. Johnson

Johnson Bill Would End Plea Bargaining For Repeat DWI Offenders

OWEN H. JOHNSON May 22, 2006

State Senator Owen H. Johnson (4th Senate District, Babylon), Chairman of the Finance Committee, announced that the State Senate today passed legislation he is sponsoring that would limit options or plea bargaining for repeat driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The bill would prohibit plea bargaining from DWI down to DWAI or from DWAI down to a non-alcohol-related offense if the person charged had been convicted of either crime within the previous 10 years.

"Plea bargaining should not be allowed for repeat drunk drivers," said Senator Johnson. "My bill would ensure that repeat drunk drivers get the penalty that is supposed to correspond with the crime they commit."

Senator Johnson's bill is part of MADD New York State's Legislative priorities for 2006. According to MADD NYS, New York State has seen an increase in DWI fatalities for the first time in over 20 years. MADD also notes that alcohol-related crashes account for 39 percent of all traffic fatalities and remain the state's most frequently committed violent crime.

"We must continue to work to end the hurt that drunk driving inflicts on so many innocent New Yorkers," said Senator Johnson. "By passing and enforcing laws that are tough on drunk drivers, we can help save innocent lives and ensure that those who disregard the law are severely punished."

The bill passed the Senate on May 22nd. It now goes to the Assembly where it is sponsored by Assemblyman Paul Tonko.