



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## Senator Addabbo Teams WITH Aarp to Make Our Streets and Sidewalks Safer

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR April 29, 2010

| ISSUE: **SENIORS**



**New York State Senate Member**

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## **Press Release**

### **For Immediate Release**

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### **SENATOR ADDABBO TEAMS WITH AARP TO MAKE OUR STREETS AND SIDEWALKS SAFER**

*Forms Broad Coalition With Elected Officials And Advocates*

**Queens, NY, April 29, 2010 -- NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.**, announced today that he is joining the AARP in a campaign to survey crosswalks and intersections and take action to make our streets and sidewalks safer.

Senator Addabbo was joined by NYS Assemblyman Michael Miller, Community Board 9 District Manager Mary Ann Carey, Forest Park Senior Center President Donna Caltabiano, representatives from local schools, and others, at the intersection of Woodhaven Blvd and 89<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Woodhaven.

This location was highlighted by Senator Addabbo because within a two-block radius there is the Forest Park Senior Center and PS 60 (pre-K through grade 5) with over 1200 students and PS 306 (pre-K through grade 2) with over 220 students. Both seniors and students have to cross 10 lanes of traffic to reach either schools or their senior center.

This effort is part of a broader statewide campaign, "Complete Streets Week: Making New York Walkable for All Generations," which will survey hundreds of dangerous roads and intersections across the state. Several factors will be taken into account including if there are adequate traffic and crossing signals, if crosswalks are properly marked, and if there is enough time to cross the streets. The results will be used to make improvements and develop legislation to ensure that streets are safe and accessible for individuals of

all ages.

Senator Addabbo said, “This location highlights a dangerous intersection in the district. If a senior or student needs to cross Woodhaven Boulevard, they have to cross 10 lanes of traffic in a very short time. Additionally, the islands separating the lanes are very narrow, where there is no space for a wheelchair, walker or baby stroller to fit without putting a pedestrian at danger. I am proud to work with AARP to bring attention to this problem and to the need for Complete Streets in our neighborhood.”

“We need a Complete Streets policy that recognizes older residents to make our community safer, healthier, and a better place to live. Keeping the walkways free of cracks and potholes will prevent injuries. By increasing the amount of time you have to cross streets and decreasing speed limits at major intersections, we can dramatically reduce pedestrian fatalities. I have made our quality of life a top priority since taking office and will continue to fight for improvements. This plan is good for our seniors and good for our community,” said Assemblymember Miller.

Community Board 9 District Manager Mary Ann Carey said, "For the last 20 years, accidents around both Woodhaven and Jamaica as well as the surrounding intersections have been a serious issue. Too often those accidents include fatalities and involve senior citizens. We need to take a serious look at these intersections and how we can improve them for the safety of everyone."

“Complete streets are vital for older residents to maintain an independent lifestyle,” said **Lois Aronstein, AARP New York State Director**. “That is why AARP has organized this statewide initiative to evaluate the most dangerous roads and intersections in New York so that we can help community members document the problems in their neighborhoods. Complete Streets legislation would help New Yorkers age in the setting of their choice because their community will be more livable and meet their growing needs.”

“Senior Centers are vital for the community and considered safe havens. We need to ensure that all seniors can safely reach their senior centers,” said Donna Caltabiano, the president of Forest Park Senior Center.

The neglect of pedestrian safety falls harder on older adults. According to the 2009 report, *Dangerous by Design* by Transportation for Americans, New York ranks 3rd in the nation for pedestrian fatalities for people age 65+. An AARP report finds that two in five Americans age 50 or over say their neighborhood sidewalks are inadequate, and nearly half cannot cross main roads close to their home safely, preventing many from walking, cycling, or taking the bus.

From 2006 thru 2008 there were 6,731 automobile accidents with 94 fatalities. In Senate District 15 alone, there were 15 fatalities, of which seven were individuals above 50.

By 2025, people age 65+ will comprise nearly 20 percent of the population. Yet two-thirds of transportation planners and engineers say they have yet to begin addressing older people in their street planning. Complete Streets policies direct transportation planners and engineers to design streets and roads with *all* people in mind including pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transportation users of all ages and abilities.

Complete Streets legislation has been introduced in the New York State Assembly and Senate by transportation and aging policy leaders in New York State. Senator Addabbo is a Co-Sponsor of this legislation. Complete Streets legislation will ensure that all new roads constructed have to provide the

same consistent level of safe travel for all motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists and public transportation users regardless of age or ability.

“We need this legislation to ensure that our streets that we construct in the future provide the same level of safety for all residents of New York State regardless of age. Our streets should not be ones that our seniors or any pedestrians are afraid to cross,” said Senator Addabbo.

For more information, contact Senator Addabbo’s Howard Beach District Office, 718-738-1111.

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