



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

Senate Passes Legislation to Strengthen Law Against Texting While Driving

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY May 3, 2011

| ISSUE: **CRIME, TRANSPORTATION, CELL PHONES**



Safety advocate Kelly Cline applauds Senate, turns focus of Families Against Texting While Driving to getting the job done in Assembly

ALBANY, N.Y. – Senator Timothy M. Kennedy, D-58th District, announced Tuesday the Senate passed legislation (S.998B | A.6174A) to strengthen state law against texting while driving, by a vote of 57-3. The bill – co-sponsored by Senator Kennedy – will make it a primary offense to text while operating a vehicle.

Under current law, a texting driver can only be stopped if he or she commits another offense, such as speeding or running a red light, first. The legislation, which now awaits Assembly approval and the Governor's signature, would allow law enforcement to crack down on the deadly habit and help prevent tragic distracted driving accidents.

Kelly Cline, a relentless advocate for roadway safety and the founder of Families Against Texting While Driving, applauded the Senate, but she made it clear that the work is not done yet. Cline will now turn her energies and the attention of Families Against Texting While Driving to pushing the legislation through the Assembly.

"I lost my son A.J. Larson to texting-while-driving. New York State needs a primary no-texting law – a tool for law enforcement to crackdown on texting-while-driving and make our roads safer for all New Yorkers," Cline said. "This law will save lives. Thank you – from the bottom of my heart – to the Senators of New York State. Now it's time to turn the focus to getting the job done in the Assembly."

Understanding that there is strength in numbers, [Cline called on her fellow New Yorkers to join Families Against Texting While Driving](#) to help push the legislation through the Assembly and onto the Governor's desk for his signature.

"Texting while driving has become an epidemic," Senator Kennedy said. "Far too many New York families have suffered through tragedies caused by distracted driving, yet motorists continue take their eyes off the road to check their phones and send text messages. This needs to end. The passage of this anti-texting-while-driving bill will undoubtedly help save lives and prevent other families and communities from enduring tragic loss."

Senator Kennedy commended Kelly Cline for her hard work and persistent advocacy with [Families Against Texting While Driving](#), and he thanked the hundreds of New Yorkers who

have already signed up and expressed their support for Families Against Texting While Driving.

“We recently announced the launch of Families Against Texting While Driving – which is working to bring New Yorkers together to send a message to Albany: stronger laws lead to safer roads. Kelly Cline has provided the energy to drive this cause forward in Western New York and across the state. Since the launch, we’ve heard from both parents and young drivers that they want tougher texting-while-driving laws. Law enforcement officials have also been vocal in calling on Albany to supply them with the tools they need to crackdown on texting drivers. This widespread and growing support will prove to be critically important in our efforts to make this texting-while-driving bill the law.

“We made the right decision when we took the lead and became the first state in the nation to ban talking on cell phones while driving. Now is the time to further ensure innocent lives are not endangered by distracted drivers. I commend my colleagues in the Senate for bringing us one step closer to better protecting all New Yorkers, and I strongly encourage the Assembly to do the same.”

In addition to strengthening traffic law, the bill also contains an education component that would add cell phone safety requirements to the Department of Motor Vehicles pre-licensing course.

Every member of Senate and Assembly received a letter Tuesday morning from Families Against Texting While Driving urging them to support the bill. Over 700 New Yorkers have joined Families Against Texting While Driving since its launch just two short weeks ago.

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