



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Martin J. Golden

Senator Golden Votes to Strengthen Law on Text Messaging While Driving

MARTIN J. GOLDEN May 4, 2011

New law would elevate text messaging while driving violation to a primary offense

Albany - State Senator Martin J. Golden (R-C-I, Brooklyn) yesterday joined his colleagues in the New York State Senate in voting to pass a bill (S.998B) that will make it easier for law enforcement to crack down on texting-while-driving offenses and prevent tragic accidents caused by drivers distracted by texting.

The bill would make text messaging while driving a primary violation rather than a secondary violation. Under the current law, a driver can only be cited for texting-while-driving if another violation, such as speeding, is also being cited.

According to a study by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, a driver is 23 percent more likely to be involved in an accident while text messaging. The (AAA) says that any activity that takes a driver's attention off the road for more than two seconds can double the risk of a crash. Some research has shown that distracted drivers are more impaired than those who are drunk or under the influence of drugs.

According to studies done by AAA, any activity that takes a driver's attention off the road for more than two seconds can double a driver's risk of a crash. The huge increase in text

messaging as a form of communication, particularly among young people, has led to a new form of distracted driving which is being blamed for tragedies throughout New York State and the nation. Federal data shows 16,000 deaths nationwide due to texting while driving.

Senator Marty Golden stated, "Texting and driving is the ultimate distraction, taking all focus and attention off the road. If you're driving, that fraction of a second that you take your eye off the road can be the difference between life and death. The lethal nature of this epidemic mandates that we pass the primary ban now. Making it easier for police officers to enforce the state's texting while driving ban would help keep all of us safe when we're on the road."

Senator Golden continued, "Besides strengthening the current law to deter drivers from texting-while-driving, this bill has an educational component in the licensing process that will convey to our young drivers the dangers of unnecessary distractions, like texting. I am confident that this legislation will better prepare new drivers for the road, and will help a great deal in preventing future accidents and potential tragedies. I am hopeful that this proposal will be passed by the Legislature and made the law of New York State."

The bill was sent to the Assembly.