



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie Joins Gov. Cuomo to Stop 'Txtg N Drvng'

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State Sen. Patty Ritchie (R,C-Heuvelton) joined Gov. Andrew Cuomo as he visited Northern New York to sign a new, tougher law to stop texting while driving.

The new law, which passed the Legislature unanimously and takes effect immediately, includes fines up to \$150 and up to three violation points. The Governor signed the bill during a stop in Watertown Thursday.

"Distracted driving is the number one cause of highway accidents and fatalities in New York State, and 'texting while driving' is a growing problem, especially among young people," Senator Ritchie said. "I was glad to support this new law, and help Gov. Cuomo and law enforcement in making our highways safer--and saving lives."

Texting and driving has been illegal in New York since 2009, and police issued over 6,000 tickets in one day during a special distracted driving sweep last year.

Unlike the old law, the new law allows police to treat texting as a "primary offense," meaning you can be stopped if an officer sees you using a handheld device while driving. Previously, a texting ticket could only be issued if police stopped you for another offense.

Texting and driving has been blamed in 26,000 highway deaths nationwide, and one study found texting drivers are over 20 times more likely to be involved in a crash.