



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

Senator Fuschillo Calls on Assembly to Pass Legislation Creating Felony Charges for Wrong-Way and Reckless Drivers

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. July 18, 2011

| ISSUE: **DRUNK DRIVING**

Yet Another Wrong-Way Driving Crash Shows Need for Tougher Laws

Following news about yet another wrong-way driving crash today, Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick) called on the State Assembly to pass legislation he sponsors to create felony charges for wrong-way and other reckless drivers.

Senator Fuschillo's call comes after an alleged wrong-way drunk driver injured a Westchester County Police Officer after crashing into his patrol car on the Bronx River Parkway early this morning. At least 22 other wrong way driving crashes and arrests occurred on Long Island alone since November 15, 2010 when off-duty NYPD Officer Andre Menzies was killed by an accused wrong-way drunk driver on the Northern State Parkway.

"As we saw yet again, wrong-way drivers continue to endanger the lives and safety of others on the road. We need to give law enforcement stronger tools to get wrong-way drivers and other reckless drivers off the roads. The Assembly should join the Senate in approving this legislation," said Senator Fuschillo, Chairman of the Senate's Transportation Committee.

Senator Fuschillo's legislation (S3452) would establish a new crime of aggravated reckless driving, which would apply to:

- * Drivers who drive the wrong way, against the flow of traffic, either knowingly or because they are intoxicated;

- * Drivers who drive more than 30 miles an hour over the speed limit while intoxicated or impaired;

- * Drivers who drive more than 30 miles an hour over the speed limit while racing, pursuing other vehicles, or excessively weaving in and out of traffic.

Aggravated reckless driving would be a class E felony, punishable by a prison sentence of up to four years.

In addition, the legislation would raise the penalty for reckless driving to a class A misdemeanor, punishable by a prison sentence of up to one year. Reckless driving is currently an unclassified misdemeanor and carries a maximum prison sentence of up to 30 days.

The legislation was approved by the State Senate on March 29th.

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