



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Safety Review Of Cairo-Durham School Entrance Needed

JAMES L. SEWARD August 18, 2011

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ONEONTA, 08/18/11 – Following an appeal from State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I-Oneonta) the NYS Department of Transportation will review safety measures on Route 145 at the entrance of Cairo-Durham Middle & High School where the recent death of a student has sparked concern.

“Highway safety is always one of my top concerns,” said Senator Seward. “Ensuring safety near a school, where young lives are at stake, is an absolute priority.”

On August 1, 2011, 17 year old Erika Cook was killed when the vehicle she was riding in was struck by an oncoming SUV. The driver Cook was riding with, 18 year old Samantha Pagan, suffered severe injuries as well. The students were turning into the school entrance on their way to summer school when the tragic accident occurred.

Senator Seward recently joined the efforts of school officials and parents in calling on the NYS Department of Transportation for a traffic safety review to determine whether a speed limit reduction on Route 145, a traffic signal, or other measures are needed to improve traffic safety.

“After meeting with Cairo-Durham Central School Superintendent Sally Sharkey and learning the community’s concerns, I personally contacted the NYSDOT Regional Director Mary Ivey. I am pleased to report that a full scale safety review will now take place including a site visit.

“With the start of the new school year just around the corner it is essential that the entrance to Cairo-Durham Middle & High School is safe, offering the best protection possible for students, faculty, staff and other school visitors,” added Seward.

A significant number of parents and community members have contacted Senator Seward’s office in response to the tragic accident calling for additional safety measures near the Cairo-Durham Middle & High School.

“Senator Seward’s prompt response and compassion are fully appreciated,” said Cairo-Durham Central School Superintendent Sally Sharkey. “I am hopeful that appropriate safety upgrades will now be made to prevent any future tragedies.”

“When parents send their children off to school in the morning they expect to see them again at the end of the day. I will do everything in my power to make sure that expectation is fulfilled,” Seward concluded.