



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

## Senator Kennedy Commends Distracted-Driving Crackdown, Praises Effective Enforcement of New Law

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY February 14, 2012

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*Especially proficient enforcement in Western New York, as police officials in Erie County wrote about 17 percent of all texting-while-driving tickets issued outside of New York City*

ALBANY, N.Y. – Senator Timothy M. Kennedy, D-58th District, commended State Police and local law enforcement agencies for cracking down on distracted driving and effectively enforcing the state's new texting-while-driving law – which the Legislature passed and

Governor Andrew Cuomo signed last summer.

“In our fight to get this law passed, we made it loud and clear that we need to empower law enforcement with the tools they needed to crackdown on distracted driving. We armed police agencies with a strong law and stiff penalties, and they put the law to work,” said Senator Kennedy.

“Distracted driving is a dangerous and too often deadly habit,” he added. “Families have suffered tragedies at the hands of distracted drivers yet the behind-the-wheel distractions seem to continue. Empowered by the new texting-while-driving law, state and local police have stepped up their efforts to help send the message home. With their effective enforcement of the law and diligent pursuit of distracted drivers, law enforcement officials are working hard to make New York’s roads safer and ultimately save lives.”

Since July 2011, law enforcement has issued 118,757 tickets for using a handheld device while driving, Governor Cuomo announced Monday. Of the 118,757 tickets, 7,495 tickets were written specifically for texting-while-driving law infractions and 111,262 for using any handheld electronic device while driving.

In Erie County, police officials have demonstrated especially strong enforcement of the texting-while-driving law, issuing 662 tickets. That is the highest total of texting-while-driving tickets issued in any county outside of New York City. By percentage, Erie County wrote about 17 percent of all texting-while-driving tickets outside of the five boroughs of New York.

As a member of the Senate Transportation Committee, Senator Kennedy made strengthening the law against distracted driving a top priority last year. Kelly Cline, a parent advocate from West Seneca who lost her son in a texting-while-driving accident in 2007,

joined forces with Senator Kennedy last year to bring supporters together as one strong voice under the Families Against Texting While Driving banner.

“Kelly Cline and Families Against Texting While Driving have fueled this effort, constantly pushing forward in our fight to end distracted driving,” Senator Kennedy said. “Without Kelly’s relentless advocacy, this legislation may have never made it through the State Legislature.”

When Albany failed to deliver in the past, Cline worked with then-County Legislator Kennedy to pass a ban on texting while driving through the Erie County Legislature. Taking the fight back to Albany last year, Cline and Kennedy provided a critical boost to efforts to get a texting ban passed through both chambers of the State Legislature.

The law carries a fine of \$150. Governor Cuomo also amended state regulations to strengthen the penalty for using a handheld electronic device while driving from two to three points on a driver’s license.

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*Senator Timothy M. Kennedy represents the New York State Senate’s 58th District, which is comprised of the towns of Cheektowaga, Eden, Hamburg and West Seneca, the city of Lackawanna and parts of the city of Buffalo. More information is available at <http://kennedy.nysenate.gov>.*