



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie Bill Helps Police Find Loved Ones in Case of Emergency

PATTY RITCHIE June 19, 2012

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Online ‘Next-of-Kin Registry’ Could Mean Difference at Serious Accident Scenes

State Senator Patty Ritchie’s bill to include emergency contact information in motorists’ driving records—making it easier for police and emergency medical staff to notify family and loved ones in the event of a serious accident—was approved by the Senate today.

Senator Ritchie’s bill directs the Department of Motor Vehicles to create an optional “Next-of-Kin Registry.” Motorists could add information about key contacts in the event of an emergency.

“In the event of an accident or a medical emergency, when minutes count, finding a family member or loved one of the accident victim can be crucial,” Senator Ritchie said.

“There are few things worse than not knowing right away when a loved one is in danger, but often a family member is needed to make key, life-or-death medical and treatment decisions, especially when the victim is teenager,” said Senator Ritchie.

“This bill will give parents, spouses, children and loved ones peace of mind, as well as help make law enforcement’s job easier in very difficult situations.”

The bill, S.5276, amends the Vehicle and Traffic Law, by adding a new section to establish a statewide internet site, known as the “next of kin registry.”

Holders of drivers’ licenses, learners’ permits and on-driver identification cards could visit a website to register up to two emergency contacts who are 18 years of age or older.

To protect motorists’ privacy, the bill includes provisions that only allow access to the information to law enforcement agents who are actively investigating an accident or emergency scene.

The bill was sent to the Assembly, where it’s sponsored by Assemblywoman Sandy Galef.