



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

Senate Transportation Committee Approves Legislation to Strengthen Distracted Driving Penalties for Teens

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. June 4, 2013

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Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick), Chairman of the Senate's Transportation Committee, today announced that the committee approved legislation to suspend the driver's licenses of teenage drivers who text or talk on a cell phone while driving.

"A driver's focus should be on the road, not their phone. Teenagers are the least experienced drivers on the road, yet they are also the most likely to engage in distracted driving. Suspending the licenses of teens who commit a distracted driving offense would reinforce how serious and dangerous distracted driving is and give teens another reason to take their eyes and hands off their phone when behind the wheel," said Senator Fuschillo.

Under the legislation (S5656), sponsored by Senator Carl Marcellino (R-Syosset) and Senator Fuschillo, teens with a junior driver's license who commit a distracted driving offense would have their license suspended for sixty days per violation. Teens and other newly licensed drivers who commit a distracted driving offense within the first six months of receiving their regular driver's license would face a sixty day license suspension for their first offense. Those who commit a subsequent offense within six months of having their license restored would face a six month license suspension. In each instance, the

suspensions would be in addition to any other applicable penalties, including five driver license penalty points and monetary fines.

Distracted driving is a widely prevalent problem among teenagers. A survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) found that in 2011, 45% of all students ages 16 and older reported to texting or emailing while driving at least once in the past 30 days. Distracted drivers are 23 times more likely to be involved in a crash than a non-distracted driver, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens, and teen drivers ages 16 to 19 are three times more likely than drivers aged 20 or older to be in a fatal crash, according to the CDC.