



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Senator Espaillat Stands With Transportation Advocates to Reduce NYC's Speed Limit

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Families for Safe Streets to Albany: Lower NYC's Speed Limit to 20 MPH Now

[Brad Aaron, StreetsBlog NYC](#)

New Yorkers who have lost loved ones to traffic violence are in Albany today to demand that lawmakers pass legislation to lower NYC's default speed limit to 20 miles per hour. About 150 residents, led by members of Families for Safe Streets, gathered for a press conference outside the capitol this morning amid a day of meetings with state representatives.

"We know that 30 miles per hour is not a safe speed, because people are dying every 33 hours," said Hsi-Pei Liao. His daughter, 3-year-old Allison Liao, was fatally struck by an SUV driver last October as she and her grandmother crossed Main Street in Flushing in a crosswalk with the signal. Joining Liao's parents were family and friends of Sammy Cohen Eckstein, Asif Rahman, Ariel Russo, Megan Charlop, Carl Nacht, Luis Bravo, Ella Bades, and others killed by drivers on New York City streets. State lawmakers Martin Malave Dilan, Adriano Espaillat, Brad Hoylman, Linda Rosenthal, and Michael Benedetto attended the presser, along with City Council members Ydanis Rodriguez and David Greenfield.

Bills from Assembly Member Dan O'Donnell and State Senator Dilan would set the maximum legal speed on NYC streets at 20 miles per hour, except on streets "where the City Council determines a different speed limit is appropriate." The bills were introduced in January and February, respectively, after motorists killed seven city pedestrians in the first 11 days of 2014. Among the victims was 9-year-old Cooper Stock, who along with his father was struck by a cab driver in an Upper West Side crosswalk.

Dilan has 11 cosponsors for the Senate bill. No members of the Senate majority — Republicans and members of the Independent Democratic Conference — have signed on yet. O'Donnell's bill has 17 cosponsors as of today. "Let's be clear — these aren't traffic 'accidents,'" said Hoylman. "These are preventable crashes. There's no reason the good folks in this chamber from Utica should be deciding the speed limit on the Upper West Side of Manhattan."

A pedestrian has only about a 50-50 chance of surviving a collision with a vehicle traveling at NYC's current speed limit of 30 mph. At 20 mph, there is a 95 percent chance the victim will live. Speeding was the leading cause of NYC traffic deaths in 2012, according to DOT. Research cited by the 20's Plenty For Us campaign shows that lower speed limits reduce collisions overall.

DOT's Slow Zone program sets speed limits at 20 mph on neighborhood streets, but current state law allows the city to do so only if other physical traffic-calming treatments are also implemented, or a street is within a quarter-mile of a school.

In addition, demand for Slow Zones far exceeds DOT's ability to install them. "The NYC DOT cannot keep up with the flood of block-by-block requests for speed bumps, stop signs and traffic lights in neighborhoods which are trying to cope with the 30 mph speed limit," said an issue explainer from Transportation Alternatives, which organized today's trip.

We'll have more on the 20 mph bills tomorrow.