



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

## Murphy announces \$312k to combat distracted driving on Westchester parkways

TERRENCE P. MURPHY July 15, 2015

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VALHALLA, NY - Coming on the heels of a bombshell report published by the Journal News which listed portions of key Westchester thoroughfares among the most accident prone roadways in New York State, today Senator Terrence Murphy announced additional funding to increase distracted-driving enforcement by Westchester County Police.

"When it comes to public safety we must take a zero tolerance approach," Senator Murphy said. "During this year's budget negotiations I was thrilled to partner with the Westchester

County Police and County Executive Astorino to secure additional state funds to further Westchester County's Accident Prevention Initiative."

In total Westchester County Police received \$2.3 million in state funding which was approved this past March. This was an increase of \$312,000 from Governor Cuomo's original proposal for Westchester County Police. These funds will now be used to combat distracted driving which includes talking on the phone or texting while driving. The National Safety Council estimates one out of every four accidents involves cell phone use.

"There are a number of behavioral factors that contribute to traffic accidents," Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino said. "By putting the watchful eyes of our patrol officers on the lookout for drivers breaking the law, and by deploying them to parts of the parkway that can be difficult to navigate, we hope to reduce accidents and save lives. I commend Senator Murphy for obtaining this funding and for being an advocate for safety on our roadways."

In 2014, county police officers issued more than 15,000 summonses on patrolled parkways. During that same time two officers were struck by cars while standing outside of their patrol vehicles at accident scenes. This year, two more officers have been stuck in similar incidents.

"On behalf of the men and women of the Department of Public Safety, I would like to thank Senator Murphy for obtaining this critically important grant," Commissioner George Longworth said. "Keeping our parkways safe is a core mission of the Westchester County Police, and we are grateful for the Senator's support."

"Several of the parkways patrolled by Westchester County Police run through the town of Mt. Pleasant and we thank Senator Murphy for the additional funding to enhance enforcement on these roads. Anything that could lead to safer travel for motorists on the

parkways is greatly appreciated by the residents of Mt. Pleasant," said Mt. Pleasant Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi.

In addition to securing this crucial funding, Senator Murphy also passed critical legislation which would direct the Department of Transportation to investigate all of the entrance ways of the passenger only parkways in Westchester County to determine which are most frequently, and illegally, accessed by oversized commercial vehicles. Once identified, DOT would install barriers to prevent accidents like today's in Pleasantville from happening. S.5774 unanimously passed the Senate in June but did not come to a vote in the Assembly.