



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

LOOK TWICE AND SAVE A LIFE

PATTY RITCHIE May 9, 2016



As the weather turns warmer, more and more people are taking to the roads on motorcycles, which in recent years, have become an increasingly popular way to get around. With more motorcycle traffic on our roadways comes a need to be more aware of how to safely share the road with all drivers—whether on two wheels or four.

May is National Motorcycle Awareness Month, a time when an extra emphasis is placed on making sure we're all extra alert while out on our roadways. At the same time, we're taking steps in Albany to help make traveling safer for motorcyclists and motorists. In fact, earlier

this month, the Senate approved a bipartisan measure I sponsor that would add motorcycle awareness training to the DMV's mandatory, pre-licensing courses. This legislation (S.4892) would improve the safety of New York roadways by making sure all new drivers are made aware of how to safely share the road with motorcycles.

While we're taking steps to improve the safety of our roadways, accidents involving motorcycles are still happening far too frequently. According to the most recent available statistics from the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles, there were more than 4,700 accidents—148 of which were fatal—involving motorcycles in 2014. Of those killed, 135 were operating motorcycles.

While you're out on the road, I encourage you to look twice and follow the below tips to stay safe:

- Remember that motorcycles aren't full-sized vehicles, and be sure to give them adequate space, as even the smallest amount of contact can have disastrous consequences for motorcyclists;
- Don't assume a motorcyclist can quickly dodge out of your way—bad weather or rough road conditions can impact their ability to maneuver;
- Motorcycles can easily be hidden in the blind spots of those behind the wheel, so make sure you look twice before changing lanes or moving through an intersection; and

- Unlike cars, many motorcycles aren't equipped with self-canceling turn signals, so be sure to treat any motorcyclist's signal light as simply a light—and wait to react before you actually see the direction the biker is going in.

Making our roads safe is a team effort—and if you're a motorcyclist, I urge you to be cautious too, and operate your bike safely at all times. During Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month, and year-round, I hope you'll stay alert and take steps to make our roadways safer for everyone.