



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Fred Akshar

## Sen. Akshar & Assemblywoman Lupardo detail efforts to combat impaired driving in NYS New funding and legislation bolster the work of STOP-DWI programs

FRED AKSHAR February 9, 2018

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Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo and Senator Fred Akshar joined local law enforcement officials Friday to discuss their ongoing work to help crack down on impaired driving across New York State. Last year, the two Southern Tier legislators were successful in securing \$1.6 million in state funding for STOP-DWI programs across the state; funds that became available for use to local programs at the beginning of 2018. Additionally, Lupardo and

Akshar are working on legislation that would help with additional revenue to STOP-DWI programs by reorganizing the collection of fines and fees paid as a result of drunk and drugged driving offenses.

“The State’s STOP-DWI programs are crucial to ensuring that our roads are safe for all travelers,” Lupardo said. “I’m proud that we were able to provide these added resources that will undoubtedly save lives. More now needs to be done to ensure equitable funding for this critical programming.”

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*"From my time as a young cop on the street performing DWI patrols to eventually administrating the program and coordinating the shifts as a Captain, I've seen firsthand the important role the STOP-DWI plays as a pre-emptive tool to help keep communities safe and get dangerous drivers off the road to prevent avoidable tragedy," said Akshar. "I'm proud to play a small role to help support this program by securing the resources needed for volunteers, advocates and law enforcement to spread awareness and save lives."*

More than half of the funding secured by Lupardo and Akshar is being used for enforcement efforts such as checkpoints, increased patrols during State crackdown periods, and overtime for local police agencies. Funds also assist with prosecution, probation, rehabilitation, and public awareness campaigns.

Lupardo and Akshar are also working on legislation (A909/S4307) that would allow for fines from impaired driving offenses to be collected ahead of other fees and surcharges collected by the state. Fines from these offenses go directly to supporting STOP-DWI programs across the state. However, under the current formula fees and surcharges are collected first often resulting in fines going unpaid. This has resulted in a loss of revenue for important STOP-DWI programs throughout the state. A previous bill (A210/S6684) was vetoed by the Governor

last year.

“STOP-DWI efforts in Broome County have been producing real results,” said Chris Marion, Broome County STOP-DWI Coordinator. “We had fewer DWI arrests in 2016 than in any other year since the program began in 1981 and the average number of alcohol-related fatalities is a third of what it was 30 years ago. The efforts of the Assemblywoman and Senator will help bolster our work so we can ensure these numbers keep going down.”

“The leadership provided by Assemblywoman Lupardo and Senator Akshar has culminated in measurable gains in the State’s ongoing efforts to reduce the incidence of drunk and drugged driving” said Suzanne Cirencione, Chair of the New York State STOP-DWI Association. “The funding they secured has provided our partners in law enforcement with the tools to deter, apprehend and prosecute drunk and drugged drivers, while also providing our partners in the probation and rehabilitation sectors with funding to enable them to fully execute their roles in addressing recidivism. These collective efforts will undoubtedly save lives, and as a result, all New Yorkers should appreciate their efforts in creating safer roadways throughout New York.”

Last fall, Lupardo and Akshar were each presented the William T. Smith Award for their outstanding contributions to the STOP-DWI effort in New York State during the annual New York State Highway Safety Conference in Niagara Falls.