



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Seward Bill to Protect New York Motorists Passes Senate

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| ISSUE: **INSURANCE FRAUD, PUBLIC SAFETY, HIGHWAY SAFETY**



ALBANY, 05/14/18 -- State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I – Oneonta) today announced senate passage of legislation he sponsors to combat auto insurance fraud. **Senator Seward's bill (S.421)** targets criminals who stage auto accidents in attempts to profit from insurance claims.

“Criminals who stage auto accidents endanger lives and drive up auto insurance costs for every New Yorker,” said Senator Seward. **“The perpetrators who commit this crime have a complete disregard for public safety and care only about making a buck. Innocent people should not be made pawns in this sometimes deadly offense. The senate has taken action in the past to shut down these criminal enterprises and it is time the assembly join us in this effort to stop insurance fraud.”**

Senator Seward's bill, known as "Alice's Law" was prompted by the 2003 death of Alice Ross, a 71-year-old grandmother who was killed as a result of a staged auto accident. Many others have also fallen victim to similar insurance fraud schemes, with women and elderly drivers most often targeted for these accidents because they are less likely to be confrontational after an accident, thereby making it easier for criminals to engage in this activity.

In addition to the potential risk of injury or death, no-fault insurance fraud costs New Yorkers an estimated \$400 million per year in higher insurance premiums.

This bill would establish tough penalties by creating a new crime of staging a motor vehicle accident. A person could be convicted of a class B, C, or D felony depending on prior criminal history, specifics of the staged incident, or if injury or death occurred.

"Comprehensive no-fault reform is desperately needed to reduce auto insurance costs, put law-breakers behind bars, and protect innocent victims," Seward concluded.

Senator Seward's legislation was included in a package of bills, passed by the senate, designed to prevent motor vehicle accidents and acts of unlawful driving, and make New York's roads safer for motorists and their families. The measures require a new study of distracted driving and other causes of teens' accidents, and increased penalties and enforcement for reckless drivers who endanger schoolchildren or construction workers, as well as those who repeatedly drive unlicensed.

The bills have been sent to the assembly for consideration.

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RELATED LEGISLATION

2017-S421

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- Introduced

- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Relates to crime of staging a motor vehicle accident

January 03, 2017

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by **James L. Seward**

Do you support this bill?