



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

## Senate Majority Pass Comprehensive Limo Regulation Reforms To Better Protect New Yorkers

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS June 6, 2019

| ISSUE: **LIMO REGULATION**

Albany, NY- The Senate Democratic Majority today passed regulation reforms designed to make traveling in limos safer and provide peace of mind for those who enlist the alternate form of transportation statewide. The bills were created in collaboration with families of victims involved in limo crashes in Schoharie last October and Cutchogue in July 2015. Among the changes are requirements for commercial driver's licenses, mandated seat belts in every vehicle carrying 9 or more passengers, and authorization for the NYS Department of Transportation to immobilize a stretch limo with an out-of-service defect.

"The legislation passed by the Senate Majority will help prevent future tragedies and builds on the new regulations for limousine operators that were passed in this year's budget," Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said. "I want to recognize the families who have suffered due to limousine accidents and who found the strength to advocate for stronger protections to save other families from sharing their grief going forward. The Senate Majority is committed to making communities safer and I commend Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, Senator Tim Kennedy, and the bill sponsors for advancing these important reforms."

The package of legislation advanced by the Senate Majority includes:

**New CDL Requirements for Limo Drivers:** This bill, S.6192, introduced by Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, Senator Tim Kennedy, requires limo drivers to have commercial driver's licenses with a passenger endorsement, which ensures that drivers are tested on the vehicles that they will be relied on to operate.

**Seatbelt Requirements:** This bill, S.6191-A, sponsored by Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, Senator Tim Kennedy, requires seat belts in any altered vehicle transporting nine or more passengers, in addition to the implementation of anti-intrusion bars and of push out escape windows.

**Immobilization of Defective Limos:** This bill, S.6193-A, sponsored by Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, Senator Tim Kennedy, authorizes the DOT to immobilize or impound a stretch limo with an out-of-service or horn-related defect.

**Amended Limo Insurance Coverage:** This bill, S.5329-A, introduced by Senator Neil Breslin, creates new minimum liability insurance requirements for for-hire vehicles carrying 8 or more passengers.

**Increased Penalties for Illegal U-Turns:** This bill, S.6188-A, introduced by Senator Jim Gaughran, expands financial and criminal penalties for large passenger motor carriers who make illegal U-turns and illegally run red lights, and also includes increased financial penalties when those same vehicles speed.

**GPS Requirements for Limos:** This bill, S.6187-A, introduced by Senator Jim Gaughran, requires every stretch limo to have a commercial GPS while operating in New York State.

**Creation of Passenger Task Force:** This bill, S.6189-A, introduced by Senator Anna Kaplan, establishes a task force to further examine limo regulations, including safety training programs, the need for rearview cameras, airbags, and speed restriction devices, and the number of miles or years a stretch limo can be on the road.

**Drug/Alcohol Testing:** This bill, S.6186-A, sponsored by Senator Metzger, mandates random drug and alcohol testing for for-hire vehicles carrying nine or more occupants.

**New Customer Service Resources:** This bill, S.6185, sponsored by Senator Rachel May, creates an app, hotline, and website for New Yorkers to report safety and customer service issues with stretch limos.

Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee and Bill Sponsor, Senator Tim Kennedy said, "These bills were the result of extensive conversations we had with the grieving families of the victims involved in the limo crashes in Schoharie and Cutchogue, and reflect a strong desire to ensure that other families across New York never have to face the same heartbreak. These changes will undoubtedly save lives and keep the public safe. These reforms were a top priority of mine since becoming Chair of the Transportation Committee, and the Senate fast-tracked their passage. In the remaining weeks left in the legislative session, I urge my colleagues in the Assembly to follow suit, and do right by the families who have channeled their grief into advocacy for long-lasting legislative changes."

Bill Sponsor, Senator Neil Breslin said, "This legislative package further builds upon the safety measures that the Senate Democratic Conference advocated for and that were ultimately included in the recently enacted state budget. These additional bills builds upon those measures ensuring that the limousine industry is held to the highest safety standards."

Bill sponsor, Senator Jim Gaughran said, "This package of limo safety bills will implement desperately needed safety measures and hold bad actors who have no business transporting our loved ones around accountable. It includes common sense measures such as GPS devices and penalizing drivers who make illegal U-turns, building upon the progress made in the State budget, while advancing protections for passengers and fellow drivers. As the busy season of proms and weddings begins, it is imperative that limousines and their drivers are held to the highest safety standards. I will fight tirelessly for these safety measures to be enacted to bring a swift end to devastating, and preventable, limo crashes."

Bill Sponsor, Senator Anna M. Kaplan said, "The unimaginable tragedies that took place in Cutchogue and Schoharie were a rude awakening for all New Yorkers about the safety of stretch limousines. As lawmakers, we have a duty to families across the state to take action to prevent such senseless tragedy from ever happening again, and I'm very proud to sponsor

legislation as part of that effort to keep our residents safe.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator Rachel May said, “I am proud to stand with my colleagues today and make New York safer for all of us. By addressing concerns over limo safety, we are taking steps to make sure no more families suffer tragic loss.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator Jen Metzger said, “The devastating loss of lives from the crash in Schoharie last fall is a call to action for stronger laws to keep people safe on our roads. Mandated drug and alcohol testing for limo drivers and other for-hire vehicles, along with the other important legislation we are taking action on today, is critically important to preventing future tragedies.”

Senator Alessandra Biaggi said, “Last year’s fatal limousine crash in Upstate New York signaled with great urgency a need to update our laws and regulations regarding limo transportation. This package of legislation serves to expand limo safety features and licensing requirements in an effort to protect both drivers and passengers, and prevent future crashes from taking place.”

Senator David Carlucci said, “We saw a devastating limo crash in 2018 in upstate New York that left 18 family and friends and two pedestrians dead. The SUV limo in this case had failed state inspections and was still operated. Since this tragic accident, we are taking action to ensure limos are safer by requiring more safety screenings and requiring seat belts in altered vehicles, carrying nine or more people. These common-sense measures, we hope, will save lives and prevent future tragedies.”

Senator Andrew Gounardes said, “This session, the Senate heard from family members who lost loved ones because of lax rules for the limousine industry, a devastation no family

should ever have to go through. These common-sense reforms are part of our larger responsibility to ensure safety for every single person and for every form of transportation.”

Senator Pete Harckham said, “New Yorkers should have confidence, when they step into a hired limousine, that the vehicle is safe and the driver is properly licensed, well-trained and not under the influence of drugs or alcohol. This package of legislation will provide important safeguards so that our state never again has to endure a tragic limousine accident and horrific loss of innocent lives.”

Senator John Liu said, “The bills we pass today bring us a big step closer to making limousines safer. This could not have been possible without the strength and resolve of the victims’ families whose lives have been forever changed in a way we hope no families will have to endure. Thanks to Chairman Kennedy and our Leader Stewart-Cousins for making this happen.”

Senator Kevin Parker said, “Safety is always a number one priority. This legislative package ensures we are taking the necessary precautions and putting guidelines in place for limousine service companies and the drivers they dispatch to follow in order to keep their passengers safe.”

Senator James Sanders, Jr. said, “These new measures and regulations will make great strides in improving the limousine industry and how it provides service as well as to ensure the safety of passengers in a meaningful way.”

Senator Kevin Thomas said, “Our communities have suffered greatly in the wake of the horrific limousine crashes in Schoharie and Long Island. I commend Senator Kennedy and Senator Gaughran for working to deliver real reform and ensure that these tragedies will never happen again. Prom season will soon be upon us, and when our young people go out in limousines to celebrate, families can have peace of mind knowing that industry safety

standards and regulations have been strengthened.”

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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## 2019-S6192

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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 stretch limousine safety requirements and changes the class of license required to operate such limousine

May 21, 2019

Senate Floor Calendar

Sponsored by **Timothy M. Kennedy**

Do you support this bill?