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Senator David Carlucci Calls for Immediate Action on Legislation to Prevent Hot Car Deaths After Four Children Die in a Matter of Days

(Albany, NY) – Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland/Westchester) is calling for the passage of the HEAT Act ([S.6642](#)), after four children died in hot cars in just a matter of days. The HEAT Act requires automakers to install a seat detection system on every vehicle sold in New York State. The alert system would notify a driver if a child or pet were left in the vehicle after the doors are shut.

Senator David Carlucci said, “The technology exists to save lives, and it is time that a seat detection system come standard on all vehicles just like seat belts and airbags. As New York reopens and the weather gets warmer, lawmakers have a responsibility to act.”

Recently, four children died after being left in hot cars unknowingly. In Shelby County, Alabama two young brothers died on Saturday, August 15th. A 4-year-old boy died the same day in Vidor, Texas. Then, a fourth child died on August 17th in Edmond, Oklahoma. This year, 20 children have died after being left in hot cars. On average, about 39 children die each year, according to KidsAndCars. Over the past two years fatalities have only gotten worse, with 54 deaths in 2018 and 53 deaths last year. KidsAndCars said more than 900 children have died in hot cars nationwide since 1990.

Carlucci said what is worse, “people do not realize children can suffer heatstroke death when temperatures are as low as 60 degrees outside.” According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) just spring weather can cause the temperature in a vehicle to reach a dangerous 110 degrees over the course of several hours. Further, the National Safety Council (NSC) found it only takes 10 minutes for the temperature inside a vehicle to rise 20 degrees. The NHTSA cites pediatric vehicular heatstroke occurs when a child’s body temperature rises to 104 degrees, and a temperature of 107 degrees is deadly.

Carlucci’s legislation will require automakers to be in compliance with the seat detection system mandate by July 1, 2021. New vehicles without the technology would not be able to be registered in New York State. While, used or older model vehicles would be grandfathered in.

The legislation was initially motivated by the tragic death of 1-year-old twins, Luna and Phoenix from New City, New York. The children were found dead after being left by their father, Juan Rodriguez, in the back of a hot car for several hours in the Bronx. Rodriguez, an Iraq War veteran, worked at a veterans hospital in the Kingsbridge section of the Bronx and said the incident was an accident. Rodriguez pleaded guilty to second-degree reckless endangerment charges and was sentenced to a one-year conditional discharge.

Carlucci’s legislation was voted out of the Transportation Committee in February and is now in the Rules Committee.

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Senator David Carlucci represents most of Rockland County and parts of Westchester County in the 38th NYS Senate District. To learn more about his legislative efforts, [click here](#) or sign up to receive [email updates](#).