



Sen. Michael Gianaris

Deputy Democratic Leader

12th District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 13, 2018

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SEN. GIANARIS LEGISLATION TO STIFFEN PENALTIES ON SUSPENDED DRIVERS ADVANCES THROUGH COMMITTEE AND MOVES TO SENATE FLOOR

Gianaris Bill Would Create Felony Charge for Injuring or Killing Someone When Driving With a Suspended License

ALBANY, N.Y. – Senator Michael Gianaris announced that his legislation to create stiffer penalties for drivers who hurt or kill people while driving with suspended or otherwise invalid licenses passed the Senate Codes Committee unanimously. Senator Gianaris has led a renewed push to enact this bill following the death of Kevin Flores, a Ridgewood teenager struck down in January by a trucker driving with a suspended license.

“These dangerous drivers continue to kill because the current punishment for taking a life while driving without a valid license does not match the crime,” said **Senator Michael Gianaris**. “We need to get serious about improving our laws before another life is lost at the hands of drivers we know should not be behind the wheel.”

Currently, the most severe penalty a District Attorney can seek in such instances is a misdemeanor. Rarely are convicted drivers sentenced to any jail time at all and are free to commit additional offenses. Phillip Monfoletto, the driver who killed Kevin Flores, had nine license suspensions on his record and continued to drive with a suspended license, even mocking the leniency of our laws in a Facebook post.

Senator Gianaris’ legislation would increase the penalty to a class E felony for seriously injuring a person and a class D felony if the accident resulted in a death, with a maximum penalty of seven years in prison. The Senator introduced his bill, [S.3299](#), after a similar incident killed 8-year old Noshat Nahian while he walked to school on Northern Boulevard in December 2013. The driver in that case was also operating with a suspended license. There have since been multiple additional deaths at the hands of improper drivers in western Queens alone.

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