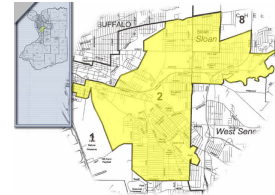


Tim Kennedy for N.Y. State Senator

BRINGING CHANGE TO ALBANY



County of Erie
Timothy M. Kennedy
Erie County Legislator, District 2



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**KENNEDY ANNOUNCES UNANIMOUS PASSAGE OF ANTI-TEXTING
WHILE DRIVING LOCAL LAW**

I'd like to take this opportunity to address the recent Local Law sponsored by myself and Legislator Tim Wroblewski that prohibits text messaging while driving anywhere in Erie County. The Erie County Legislature unanimously passed this law on October 22, 2009. While this legislation is important to me as a policymaker and member of the Erie County Legislature Public Safety Committee, the driving force behind the proposed law is my role as a parent of two children.

Spurred by recent automobile fatalities in which texting was involved, and on the heels of a state bill that only lists texting while driving as a secondary offense, this law takes the proactive approach of classifying texting as a primary offense, one which warrants a traffic stop if observed by police or deputies. Texting is now the preferred means of communication amongst our youth in this country, and different studies have shown it to reduce driver's reflexes similarly to driving while intoxicated.

Making text messaging while driving illegal and a primary offense in Erie County and across NY State is simply common sense. Think about it: while it is illegal to hold a phone up to your ear and talk while driving, the law as it stands today says it is not equally dangerous or illegal to hold an electronic device in your lap or hand, look down, find the keys to press, hit them, check and re-check sentences, and finally look back up to reorient yourself to the road...no matter the speed...no matter the traffic or time of day! It is absolutely absurd!

Erie County is not the only county in the state of New York to consider this tougher stance against texting while driving; other counties have already adopted such a law and Niagara County has passed a similar measure. It is important to note that this Local Law was introduced to fill a need that had been left by the state bill; however, if the state or federal government passes a law that engenders the same protections, the Erie County law will be supplanted.

As the law is implemented in Erie County, there will no doubt be a renewed focus on driver safety, particularly among the youth of Western New York, of whom too many

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have already perished at the hands of this dangerous practice. I am confident that adopting this law to toughen the stance against texting while driving will naturally serve as a deterrent to unsafe driving and will promote the overall safety of drivers, passengers, and other travelers on the road.

If even one life is saved, this law will have proven itself worthwhile.

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