



Assemblymember Kevin A. Cahill

101st Assembly District

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CAHILL: “MOVE OVER” LEGISLATION SIGNED INTO LAW *Ensures Uniform Safety Measures for Approaching All Emergency Vehicles*

(Albany, NY) -- Assemblymember Kevin Cahill (D-Ulster, Dutchess) announced that legislation intended to provide standards of care to safely approach any hazard vehicle parked, stopped, or standing on the shoulder of a highway, has been signed into law by the Governor. This measure, Assembly Bill 177-B, requires drivers to exercise caution by moving over to the adjacent lane or slowing down when approaching or passing any emergency vehicle displaying its amber lights while assisting a motorist on all New York State roadways. The law goes into effect on January 1, 2012.

“The men and women that respond to roadside emergencies are assigned with a very important, and very dangerous task,” said Assemblymember Cahill. “It is only right that these individuals, whether they are operating an ambulance or a tow truck, are afforded the same respect and consideration under the law.”

The new law requires the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles to include an explanation of the requirements for approaching a stopped vehicle with its hazard lights flashing within the driver’s manual provided to those applying for a learner’s permit, as well as questions on the driver’s exam on such procedures.

On August 27, 2003, Village Judge Matthew Parker of Ellenville tragically lost his 21-year old son, Kyle, a tow truck driver, while he was assisting a disabled motorist on the side of the New York State Thruway. According to reports, Kyle followed all of the proper procedures. However, he was struck by a tractor trailer that drifted off to the side of the road. Since that time, Assemblymember Cahill has been working with Judge Parker and others to make sure that Kyle’s death was not in vain.

“I am very grateful to everyone who has worked on moving this bill, especially Assemblymember Cahill,” said Judge Matthew Parker. “Over the last eight years, he never gave up and continued his strong advocacy in the Assembly. I know that this law will make the roads of New York safer for tow truck operators and people who assist motorists who are disabled on the side of the road.”

“Reports have estimated that nationally, nearly 50 to 60 tow truck operators lose their lives in roadside accidents each year,” said Assemblymember Cahill. “By harmonizing my legislation with the Ambrose-Searles Act of 2010, we can join the thirty-two other states whose “move over” laws apply to both emergency vehicles and tow trucks.”

“Not a day goes by when a tow truck driver is not brushed back by a speeding motorist as he or she works on the sides of our state's highways,” said Peter O’Connell, representative to the Empire State Towing and Recovery Association. “Indeed, six tow truck drivers have perished and numerous others have been seriously injured while performing this dangerous and often unappreciated work in recent years. This law will undoubtedly save lives and the Empire State Towing and Recovery Association is grateful to the Governor (who, himself, was once a tow truck driver) and the sponsors of this legislation for providing this much needed protection to our members.”

“Kyle Parker gave his life helping others in need. Through his relentless advocacy, Judge Matt Parker's dedication to making sure that his son’s sacrifice was not in vain will protect the lives of emergency vehicle operators across New York State forever more,” Assemblymember Cahill concluded.