



National Police Association
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NationalPolice.org

MEMORANDUM

TO: New York State Legislature

FROM: Sgt. Betsy Brantner Smith (Ret.)

DATE: March 3, 2025

RE: The National Police Association Endorses NYS S4774 Christopher Ryan and A5953 Judy Griffin for the 2025 legislative session

In July 2020, a tragic incident in Wantagh, New York, claimed the life of 20-year-old Kyriakoula (Kyra) Gasparis. She was a passenger in a vehicle driven by an unlicensed individual who, despite the severity of the incident, and because of inadequate New York law and a Judge's ill discretion not to incarcerate despite the Nassau County DA's office high recommendation of the maximum sentence by law, received no jail time. This profound injustice spurred Kyra's mother, Rena Gasparis, to since advocate for legislative change to prevent similar tragedies in the future. It's a mission for her, as Eddy Gerdy Delaleu received zero jail time as the driver of a collision that killed Kyra. He was charged with aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle, a misdemeanor.

In response to such incidents, Senator Christopher J. Ryan of the 50th Senate District has introduced Senate Bill S4774 and State Assemblymember Judy Griffin has introduced Assembly Bill A05953. The bills seek to amend the penal law to include causing serious physical injury while operating a vehicle with a suspended, revoked, or no license as a class E felony under vehicular assault in the second degree. Additionally, they propose the creation of the crime of vehicular homicide, addressing cases where unlicensed driving results in severe bodily injury and fatality due to driver negligence. The current legal framework in New York inadequately addresses the consequences of unlicensed individuals causing severe harm or death on the roads. Operating a vehicle without a valid license is not merely a minor infraction; it is a deliberate disregard for the law and public safety. When such negligence leads to catastrophic outcomes, the penalties must reflect the gravity of the offense.

The bills aim to rectify this gap by ensuring that individuals who choose to drive without a valid license and subsequently cause serious injury and/or death are held accountable through appropriate felony charges. This legislative change serves multiple purposes: it delivers justice to victims and their families, acts as a deterrent against unlicensed driving, and underscores the State's commitment to road safety. The introduction of vehicular homicide as a distinct offense is a pivotal aspect of this bill. It acknowledges the severe consequences of unlicensed driving and ensures that perpetrators face commensurate repercussions. This provision not only brings justice to victims but also serves as a potent

deterrent, signaling that New York State will not tolerate such reckless behavior. These bills are a necessary and compassionate response to a critical issue affecting New York's communities. By enacting this legislation, the state will honor the memory of individuals like Kyriakoula (Kyra) Gasparis and take a definitive step toward preventing similar tragedies in the future. It is imperative that lawmakers prioritize the passage of this bill to reinforce the sanctity of life and the rule of law on New York roads.