

On given day, we share roadways with more than 2 million drunk drivers who have had three or more prior convictions

(Woodbury, NY)—Today, Congressman Steve Israel (D-Huntington) called on Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood to expedite funds for a new federal program aimed at curbing drunk drivers from getting behind the wheel. A recent string of fatal crashes on Long Island have been caused by drivers with blood alcohol levels well above the legal limit.

Rep. Israel said, "I refuse to keep opening the morning paper to find that another Long Island teenager has been taken from us because of the senseless actions of a drunk driver. It's time for us to take action and make sure that we are doing everything in our power to stop these tragedies. Today I am calling on the Department of Transportation to accelerate funds to stop drivers who think about getting behind a wheel after drinking."

Rep. Israel called on Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood to expedite funds for the new Driver Alcohol Detection System for Safety (DADSS) research program authorized by Congress this week. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is set to work with leading automakers through the Automotive Coalition for Traffic Safety to research in-vehicle technology to prevent alcohol-impaired driving. The technology would be an important tool to keep past offenders from getting behind the wheel while drunk. Current technology is in the form of an ignition interlock, which is a breath device linked to a vehicle's ignition system. However, this intrusive response-based technology is not ideal for widespread, preventive use.

\$10.5 million in funding over two years was appropriated for the DADSS research program as part of the Surface Transportation bill, which passed in Congress last Friday.

Tom McCoy, Executive Director of Mothers Against Drunk Driving-Long Island, who also joined the congressman said, "This is the most important technology boost for autos since the airbag. If we can figure out DADSS technology, we could save thousands of lives per year."

On average, someone is killed in the U.S. in a crash caused by a drunk driver once every 50 minutes, although studies show only 2 percent of intoxicated drivers are caught. In the first four

months of this year, Nassau County experienced 33 fatalities from alcohol-involved crashes.

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