



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1203

Resolution calling upon the appropriate committee of the City Council to hold hearings on the thirteen percent increase in traffic fatalities from 1998 to 1999, and the enforcement by the New York City police department to ensure on-street safety for bicyclists, pedestrians and other roadway users.

By Council Members Carrion, Malave-Dilan, Freed, Henry, Koslowitz, Marshall and Nelson; also Council Members Eisland, Espada, Foster, Harrison, Leffler, Linares, McCaffrey, Michels, Perkins, Quinn and Sabini

Whereas, New York City has a highly visible traffic enforcement program that includes the forfeiture of vehicles driven aggressively and/or by alcohol and drug abusers, and periodic crackdowns on violations of traffic and parking regulations; and
Whereas, In addition, the City has sought to promote safety by modifying the street crossing patterns of pedestrians in mid-town Manhattan and other busy intersections in the rest of the City; and

Whereas, Traffic fatalities are one of the most important measure of success of a traffic safety program, and by this indicator, 1999 represented a setback with 419 persons killed -- 49 more persons than in 1998; and

Whereas, The 13% increase in traffic fatalities occurred even though the number of deaths caused by drunk drivers fell from 34 in 1998 to 23 in 1999; and

Whereas, By far the biggest increase in the number of fatalities was to cyclists, 34 of whom were killed in 1999, a 70% increase from 1998; and

Whereas, The previous high for cyclist fatalities was in 1997 when 24 cyclists died; and

Whereas, The New York Times of January 8, 2000 in an article entitled, "Cyclist Fatalities Increased 75% in 1999, Puzzling Police," reported that the supervisor of the Police Department's accident investigation unit, Inspector Vincent Kennedy, stated the "primary contributing factor" in 74% percent of the cyclist fatalities was "cyclist error;" and

Whereas, The Daily News of January 9, 2000 in an article entitled, "Streets Get Deadlier Cyclist fatalities lead way, with 70% increase," similarly reported that Police Deputy Inspector Robert Sharpe, commander of the "City's Traffic Management Center," a joint operation of the City Transportation Department and the New York City Police Department, called for an educational campaign directed at cyclists because they were partly responsible for the accidents; and

Whereas, The advocates for pedestrians' rights were reported in the New York Times to believe that Police Department analyses of traffic accidents involving cyclists are overly reliant on the drivers' version of the accidents and the Department has a "behind-the-windshield perspective, a mistaken belief that the streets belong to the driver rather than both the driver and the cyclist;" and

Whereas, The Council should determine if New York City Police Department Accident-prone Location data has been used systematically to identify locations most dangerous for cyclists and other roadway users; and

Whereas, Improvements in street safety requires the systematic identification of sites which are prone to the greatest number of motor vehicle/bicycle accidents in order to guide on-street safety improvements aimed at reducing these accidents; and

Whereas, Bicyclists, pedestrians and the public deserve safe conditions on the City's streets; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the appropriate committee of the City Council hold hearings on the thirteen percent increase in traffic fatalities from 1998 to 1999, and the enforcement by the New York City police department to ensure on-street safety for bicyclists, pedestrians and other roadway users.

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