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Committee Assignment: Senate Freedom 3

Bill #:SF-18

Sponsors: Grace Brody, Bridget Connolly, Owen Luntz

An Act To Amend Vehicle and Traffic Law Article 19, Section 502, paragraph 4(b) to add paragraph 4(b)(i) to require that road tests include a test of driving skills on roads with a speed limit of 55 miles per hour or greater.

The People of the State of New York, represented in the Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Purpose To ensure that licensed drivers within New York State possess the skills and competency required to drive on roads with speed limits of 55 miles per hour or greater.

Summary of Provisions

Section 1

Road test: shall mean an assessment of a permit holder's ability to drive that takes place at least six (6) months after the acquisition of the learner's permit.

Licensed driver: shall mean an individual who is in possession of a valid New York State driver's license.

High speed driving skills: shall mean any skill required to operate a vehicle at speeds at or above 55 miles per hour, including but not limited to: merging, lane changing and defensive driving.

Section 2

4(b)(i) All road tests administered in conjunction with an application for a driver's license shall include a test of driving skills on roads with a speed limit of 55 miles per hour or greater, including but not limited to merging, lane changing and defensive driving.

Justification

From 2011 to 2015, there were 12,000 speed-related crashes in New York State alone. In 2015 this included 29% of roadway fatalities. High-speed driving is high risk driving. Currently, the New York State road test may include a three-point turn, left turn, and parallel parking, with no requirements for assessment of high speed driving skills. Despite the New York State road test's aim to holistically assess prospective drivers, it fails to do so. While driver's education and the five-hour course may include general information on high-speed driving, it is possible to receive a New York State driver's license with no practical assessment of high-speed driving skills. High-speed roadways are congested, unpredictable, and dangerous. Inexperienced drivers create a hazard for themselves and others on the road. Skills required to safely navigate high-speed roadways include merging, lane



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changing, and defensive driving. This bill will ensure that drivers acquire those skills necessary to be safe drivers on all New York State roadways.

Fiscal Implications

This bill will have minor and absorbable costs to the Department of Motor Vehicles within the state budget.

Environmental Implications

Establishment of a road test that more accurately reflects the driving conditions faced by the average driver in New York State will increase safety on New York State roadways.

Effective Date

This bill will go into effect one year after passage.