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Sosnowski Bill Lets Police Warn Smokers Driving with Kids

Jason Claffey, March 17, 2014

The Senate passed legislation (2014-S 2084) today (March 13) authorizing police officers to provide a verbal warning to an individual who is smoking in a vehicle containing a restrained child.

The bill, sponsored by Sen. V. Susan Sosnowski (D-Dist. 37, South Kingstown, New Shoreham), would allow law enforcement officials to notify the offending driver of the dangers of exposing young children to secondhand smoke. The act does not allow a police officer to stop or search a motor vehicle based solely on the individual's decision to smoke with a child in the car.

“This bill is really about speaking up for the children who do not have the power to prevent passengers from endangering their health with secondhand smoke,” Senator Sosnowski said. “I congratulate my colleagues in the Senate for supporting this legislation and allowing our law enforcement officials to give parents and others a full understanding of what they are doing when they smoke cigarettes in close quarters with children.”

The Senate passed the legislation in a 35 to 0 vote. According to **Global Advisors on Smoke-free Policy (GASP)**, 17 states in the nation have passed laws to prohibit people from smoking inside vehicles transporting foster children. **GASP is a nonprofit organization which works to promote a tobacco-free existence.**

Senators Joshua Miller (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence), Elizabeth A. Crowley (D-Dist. 16, Central Falls, Cumberland, Pawtucket), Juan M. Pichardo (D-Dist. 2, Providence) and Catherine Cool Rumsey (D-Dist. 34, Exeter, Charlestown, Hopkinton, Richmond, West Greenwich) cosponsor the bill. It will now be transmitted to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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