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Acting Governor Guadagno Signs Nikhil's Law To Promote Safe Driving

Tuesday, August 04, 2015

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Trenton, NJ – This morning, Acting Governor Kim Guadagno signed "Nikhil's Law" (A-1781) at the Motor Vehicle Commission in Randolph to emphasize to new drivers the importance of following the state's motor vehicle traffic laws and the tragic consequences of failing to do so. The bill was named for 11-year-old Nikhil Badlani, who was killed in a car crash in 2011 when another car failed to stop at a stop sign.

"Like the Badlani family, I wish I didn't need to be here today. We all wish we could prevent every car accident, every serious injury, every fatality. We know that we can't, but that doesn't mean we won't try," said Acting Governor Guadagno. "A moment of caution can make all the difference. This bill will send Nikhil's message to not just our youngest drivers, but all of our drivers. And, hopefully, the Badlanis' tragedy will help prevent other families from enduring such hardships."

"Nikhil's Law" requires the driver's license examination as well as the driver's manual to address the dangers of failing to comply with the State's motor vehicle traffic laws and the STOP for Nikhil Safety Pledge.

"To lose a loved one due to the negligence of someone else's action is devastating. We hope that drivers will think of the others that they put at risk when they disobey traffic laws. "Nikhil's Law" reinforces good driving behaviors and, when followed, will ensure safety for all," said Sangeeta Badlani, Nikhil's mother.

Nikhil was an aspiring musician, and the Nikhil Badlani Foundation was established to expand and enhance the lives of underserved children in West Orange and neighboring communities through individualized lessons for talented musicians and scholarships for graduating seniors. Additionally, the Foundation partners with state and local authorities to promote awareness of traffic rules and improve traffic safety in residential areas by spreading the message "STOP means stop."

"We are very happy that Nikhil's Law unanimously passed the Assembly and the Senate and has been signed into law," added Sunil Badlani, Nikhil's father. "It is our belief and hope that if drivers are made aware of the dangers of failing to follow motor vehicle traffic laws, and have the opportunity to take the STOP For Nikhil Safety Pledge, they will be more inclined to follow safer driving practices and make our roads safer for all."

According to the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety, there were nearly 265,000 traffic crashes, nearly 76,000 traffic injuries, and more than 550 traffic fatalities in 2014.

Acting Governor Guadagno has previously been involved in key initiatives to encourage safe driving in New Jersey. In 2012, the Acting Governor signed "Kulesh, Kubert, and Bolis' Law" to assist in the criminal prosecution of violators of the hands-free law who cause serious crashes. In February of 2015, she announced the start of the Motor Vehicle Commission's "Just Drive" campaign to dissuade drivers from talking and texting while driving.

More than 1,000 drivers have taken the STOP for Nikhil Safety Pledge. The pledge is available through the Nikhil Badlani Foundation at www.nikhilbadlanifoundation.org.

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Brian Murray
Nicole Sizemore
609-777-2600



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Office of the Governor
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000