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**FOLLOWING OFFICER TSAKOS' MEMORIAL SERVICE, MAYOR DE BLASIO
ANNOUNCES SUPPORT FOR CRASH VICTIMS RIGHTS AND SAFETY ACT**

NEW YORK— Following the funeral of NYPD Officer Anastasios Tsakos, who was killed by a dangerous driver, Mayor de Blasio announced support for the Crash Victims Rights and Safety Act. The legislation, currently advancing through the State Legislature, takes aggressive action against dangerous driving and supports the families of crash victims.

“Officer Anastasios Tsakos should be home today with his wife and his two beautiful children. Instead, yet another life has been taken by a reckless driver. This cannot continue. We must pursue fundamental changes. In honor of Officer Tsakos, I’m calling on the State Legislature to immediately pass the Crash Victims Rights and Safety Act,” said **Mayor de Blasio**. “For Officer Tsakos and every victim of traffic violence on our streets, let’s deliver on the full power and promise of Vision Zero and keep our streets safe for generations of New Yorkers to come.”

"Vision Zero is about leaving no stone unturned to improve safety of all those who share our roads, whether through street redesign or legislative change. These important policy changes will keep us moving towards a safer city," said **Deputy Mayor for Operations Laura Anglin**.

“The tragic loss of Officer Tsakos last week really underscored all the work we still have left to do on Vision Zero,” said **New York City Department of Transportation Commissioner Hank Gutman**. “From 24/7 speed cameras to tougher standards for drunk driving and so much more, the Crash Victims Safety and Rights Act is the legislative package that honors Officer Tsakos’ memory and meets this moment. I look forward to speaking with State legislators about how its passage will save lives on New York City streets.”

"Creating safer streets for walking and bicycling is key to taking action on climate," said **Ben Furnas, Director of the Mayor's Office of Climate and Sustainability**. "Thank you to the State Legislature for taking up these critical proposals so that New Yorkers don't have to put their lives at risk just to get around."

The Crash Victims Rights & Safety Act includes:

- **Traffic Crash Victim Bill of Rights:** This legislation enacts rights for traffic crash victims in related legal proceedings similar to the federal Crime Victims’ Rights Act. This includes the right to receive timely crash reports and the right to attend crash-related hearings and submit impact statements. It would also require the State of New York to produce a report to the

legislature with data about current crash victim compensation and support, including no-fault insurance and private insurance, to inform the need for adequate victim support.

- **Sammy's Law:** Sammy's Law is named after Samuel Cohen Eckstein, a 12-year-old boy from Brooklyn who was killed by a reckless driver in 2013. This bill would repeal the current state regulation that prevents New York City from easily setting 15 mph or lower speed limits on streets where pedestrians and vehicles mix. Each one-mph increase in speed results in nearly a three percent increase in mortality. Lower speed limits in New York City, authorized by the State Legislature in 2014, contributed to a 36 percent decline in pedestrian deaths. By widely authorizing speed limits lower than 25 mph, New York City would join other U.S. cities such as Washington, D.C., Portland, OR, Seattle, WA, and Minneapolis, MN.
- **BAC lowered to .05:** This legislation would lower the blood alcohol concentration limit for driving from .08 percent to .05 percent, and for aggravated driving while intoxicated from .18 percent to .12 percent.
- **Dangerous driving "Rule of Two:"** This bill clarifies existing law to overturn the "rule of two," a judicial precedent that requires two reckless acts to convict a driver of criminal negligence, to make it easier for the most reckless drivers to be held accountable under existing misdemeanor law. This legislation would replace "reckless" with "dangerous" in "reckless driving" to avoid confusion with state of mind analysis.
- **Speed safety cameras:** This legislation would:
 - Allow the City to operate speed safety cameras 24/7
 - Escalate penalties for extreme repeat offenders, including license suspension
 - Allow records of speeding to be shared with auto insurance companies.
- **Vehicle safety rating:** This bill would require the New York State Department of Transportation and the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles to create a pedestrian safety rating system that accounts for the risk a motor vehicle's design poses to vulnerable road users like pedestrians and cyclists. It would also require that such ratings be displayed prominently at the point of sale and on a state website.
- **Safe passage for cyclists:** This legislation would provide a clear and objective definition of what a "safe distance" is for motorists when overtaking bicyclists on the road (at least three feet), provide a mechanism for accountability following a crash, and foster a culture of safer driving through education.
- **DMV pre-licensing course:** This bill aims to create a safer and more thoughtful road culture by requiring robust street safety education, starting when new drivers get their driver permits. The bill would require instruction in pedestrian and bicyclist safety as part of drivers' pre-licensing courses and would educate new drivers on how to safely pass bicyclists on the road and the dangers that large multi-ton vehicles pose to pedestrians, bicyclists, and other vulnerable road users.

"We have partnered with the de Blasio administration to launch Vision Zero and on our long-running campaign to secure and expand life-saving speed safety cameras. We are very grateful that he is fully supporting the Crash Victim Rights and Safety Act this year in Albany. Our just recovery and the lives of New Yorkers depend on the state legislature passing this package of bills this session, and we will continue to work with our partners in Albany and the de Blasio

administration to expand the promise of Vision Zero on our streets," said **Danny Harris, Executive Director of Transportation Alternatives.**

"We can't bear to see one more family go through our nightmare of losing a loved one in a crash and are grateful for Mayor de Blasio's support of the Crash Victim Rights and Safety Act," said **Amy Tam, member of Families for Safe Streets and mother of Allison Liao, a three-year-old who was killed in 2013 by a reckless driver while crossing the street in Flushing with her grandmother.** "These lifesaving bills address the rampant speeding on our streets, reckless driving, the dangerous design of vehicles, and also provides support for those who have been personally impacted by a crash. We need our state legislature to pass this life saving package of bills without delay. The carnage on our streets has got to stop."

"This year is one of the deadliest years for traffic fatalities in nearly a decade," said **State Senator Andrew Gounardes.** "We must end the epidemic of traffic violence in our city. We know what changes we need to implement to ensure that no parent, senior, or person of any age lives in fear of crossing the street or riding a bike. The Crash Victims Right and Safety Act is a strong legislative package that will make the changes necessary to keeping our streets safe for everyone. These bills will save lives by holding reckless drivers accountable, prevent speeding through automated enforcement, teach the next generation of drivers how to share the roadway properly, and much more. I'm glad to see the Mayor endorsing this package of bills and I urge my colleagues to help us pass the CVRSA as soon as possible."

"At least 243 New Yorkers lost their lives due to car crashes in 2020, the deadliest year on record since 2014, yet Albany still won't let New York City lower its speed limits. My legislation, Sammy's Law, including in the Crash Victims Rights & Safety Act, would change that. Reducing traffic speed is a proven way to make our streets safer, especially as the pandemic has led to increased car use, bike ridership and outdoor dining. I'm grateful the Mayor's office supports the Crash Victims Rights & Safety Act and I appreciate the work of Families for Safe Streets, Transportation Alternatives, Mothers Against Drunk Driving and New York Bicycling Coalition to turn these pieces of legislation into law," said **State Senator Brad Hoylman.**

"Reckless, dangerous driving is an epidemic on our streets," said **Assembly Member Linda B. Rosenthal, Chair of the Committee on Social Services.** "A new study released by Insurify Insights concluded that four of the five boroughs (Staten Island 1, Bronx 2, Brooklyn 4, Manhattan 6) as among the top ten most dangerous cities in the country for pedestrians. While Vision Zero has improved street safety, more needs to be done. I am a sponsor of legislation that will make it easier to get reckless, dangerous drivers off the road. Along with the other bills in the Crash Victims Rights & Safety Act, we have a real opportunity to protect pedestrians, hold dangerous drivers accountable and make the streets safer for all users. We all deserve to live in a city in which the streets are safe and families don't fear for their life every time they cross the street. I look forward to continuing my work with colleagues in State and City government and the advocates at Families for Safe Streets, Transportation Alternatives and more to see these bills become law."

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