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VISION ZERO: MAYOR ANNOUNCES RECORD LOW TRAFFIC FATALITIES FOR FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 2018

Expiration of speed cams on July 25th threatens progress on reducing fatalities unless State Senate acts

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio announced that under the Vision Zero program, New York City had ended the first six months of 2018 with the fewest traffic fatalities ever measured in any six-month period. As of June 30th, the city had recorded 81 fatalities, the lowest ever in a six-month period, and only the second time that fewer than 100 lives had been lost in a half-year period. The Mayor also noted how the data continue to show New York City bucking national fatality trends, giving much of the credit to the speed-camera law, which because of State Senate inaction, now faces expiration later this month.

“No loss of life on our streets is acceptable,” said **Mayor de Blasio**. “Under Vision Zero, we have made enormous strides towards safer streets for all, with traffic fatalities declining for the past four-and-a-half-years. But we will never rest on our laurels, and will keep fighting for the safety of our fellow New Yorkers. The state Senate’s failure to act on speed cams puts this progress, and the lives of school children, at risk. They must act now – lives are at stake.”

The Vision Zero highlights from the first six months of 2018 include:

- Fatalities are down or even in all modes except among motorcyclists. Cyclist fatalities dropped from 10 to 7, motor vehicle occupant fatalities fell from 27 to 15, while pedestrian fatalities remained at 47. Motorcyclist fatalities have increased from 11 to 12.
- New York City’s previous record-low for traffic fatalities during a six-month period was the first half of 2017, when 93 fatalities were recorded.
- Declines by borough have been largest in Manhattan (9 fatalities in 2018 compared to 21 in 2017) and in the Bronx (13 this year from 22 last year).

“Nowhere else in America has seen our continued year-over-year declines in traffic fatalities,” said **DOT Commissioner Polly Trottenberg**. “Now, under the Mayor’s leadership, we are going on a fifth straight year of overall declines in fatalities with national trends going in the reverse direction. Given the central role we believe speed cameras have played in making our streets safer, we are however concerned that inaction by Albany could bring a tragic end to that

progress. We urge the State Senate to return to Albany save lives by expanding and renewing our speed camera program.”

“From running background checks to conducting on-the-ground enforcement, the TLC ensures that professional drivers are on the road and holds its licensees accountable for driving safely. Our agency’s Vision Zero work ranges from field enforcement against speeding drivers and red light runners to ensuring that drivers with poor records don’t get behind the wheel of a taxi or for-hire vehicle,” said **Commissioner Meera Joshi**. “We celebrate the diligent work of our city’s safest and most talented drivers at our annual Safety Honor Roll, and make certain that the thousands of new licensees every month who want to drive a TLC-licensed vehicle learn about Vision Zero and the rules of the road in mandatory driver education.”

“Vision Zero helps keep students safe as they travel to and from school, and we’ll continue working in close partnership with the NYPD and DOT to ensure a safe commute for all families,” said **Schools Chancellor Richard A. Carranza**. “We need the State Senate to act so that we can continue to have speed cameras in school zones over the summer and during the entire school year.”

Traffic fatalities have declined for four consecutive years under Vision Zero. Over that time, New York City has embraced a multi-faceted variety of changes in education, engineering and enforcement, including: lowered the City’s default speed limit to 25 MPH; targeted priority geographies in every borough through a historic number of street redesign projects; added over 2,000 new Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPIs) that serve as pedestrian head-starts; calmed dangerous left-turns; added more than 60 miles of protected bike lanes; and increased enforcement by NYPD of the City’s traffic laws. Finally, in addition to its robust camera enforcement program for speeding, the City also used automated enforcement against drivers who run red lights and drive in bus lanes.

The speed camera enforcement program faces potential shutdown within weeks if the State Senate fails to act on the renewal and expansion. The program resulted in a 63 percent decline in speeding violations at a typical school-zone camera location, and 81 percent of vehicle owners who received a violation within a school zone did not receive a second violation. State legislation currently allows for 140 school zone locations; legislation in Albany has passed the Assembly that would increase the number of zones to 290 and expand the enforcement area to within a quarter-mile of schools. The DOT has noted that 84 percent of deaths and severe injuries between 2012 and 2016 occurred at times or locations where cameras are prohibited. The renewal bill has 33 sponsors in the Senate where you only need 32 votes to pass any given bill. However, it still needs to be brought to a vote on the floor.

“In many ways, our City is safer than it’s ever been but there is more we can do,” said **New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer**. “We know there are hundreds of thousands of vehicles in New York City that repeatedly speed near schools and run red lights – and we also know that speed cameras make our streets safer. When it comes to keeping our kids safe, there should be no second thought. Inaction by the State is not only wrong – it’s dangerous.”

“Vision Zero is working, and that is all the more reason to keep up the fight for safe streets, not to go backwards,” said **New York City Council Speaker Corey Johnson**. “We need to keep building on this success until there are no traffic deaths in the city, and to get there we need the State Senate to do its job. We need Republicans in the State Senate to put kids’ lives before politics and extend and expand our speed camera program.”

“Data shows that Vision Zero is working,” said **State Senator Jose Peralta**. “Although one traffic fatality is one too many, the reality is that in New York City there has been a reduction in the number of traffic-related deaths. But we need to do more, and to help ensure that this trend continues, we have an obligation to students and New Yorkers to renew and expand the school zone speed camera program, an initiative that has saved countless lives. I applaud Mayor de Blasio, city agencies and advocates for their efforts to make our road and streets safer.”

“While Vision Zero has been making steady progress at reducing traffic deaths in New York City, the State Senate Majority seem to be doing all they can to turn back the clock on that progress,” said **State Senator Liz Krueger**. “The fact that New York City needs Albany’s permission to operate speed cameras is absurd, but it is truly tragic that children’s lives are being endangered because of the intransigence of a few Senators. I stand with Mayor de Blasio and the millions of pedestrians in New York City in calling on the State Senate to renew and expand the speed-camera program before it is too late.”

“Due to the diligent and continuous implementation of Vision Zero, the first six months of 2018 have seen the lowest number of traffic fatalities ever recorded in our City in any six month period,” said **State Senator Gustavo Rivera**. “I commend the Mayor’s office, the DOT and the NYPD for working together to make our streets safer for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers alike. This Vision Zero milestone is a clear indication that we need to extend and expand our City’s speed camera program past July 25. I call on my colleagues in the State Senate to support this measure, which will ensure the safety and well-being of the millions of New Yorkers using our streets daily.”

"Traffic fatalities are headed in the right direction, down toward zero," said **State Senator James Sanders Jr.** "The Mayor's Vision Zero Plan is working. Preventing traffic fatalities and promoting the peaceful co-existence of pedestrians and motorists should be applauded. If New York continues to lead the nation in year-after-year declines in traffic fatalities, zero deaths is achievable."

"We have a program that saves lives and reduces harm to our residents and which has been championed by Mayor De Blasio," said **State Senator Luis Sepulveda**. "Common sense dictates that we continue and strengthen Vision Zero, including the speed cameras component of this strong public safety initiative."

"Through Vision Zero, we've seen it is possible to drastically reduce traffic deaths in New York City," said **State Senator Toby Ann Stavisky**. "Many said it was not possible, but these latest figures show we are continuing to improve on Vision Zero. By failing to renew the speed camera program, the Senate Republicans have chosen to hold our children hostage to serve their political agenda."

“The data speaks for itself: speed cameras keep our streets safe for our kids and pedestrians .And as a parent of a third grader, I’m personally concerned about speeding and reckless driving in front of schools come September. It’s absolutely shameful that the State Senate let the speed safety legislation lapse,” said **State Senator Brad Hoylman**.

“This mid-year Vision-Zero report confirms what many of us already know – speed cameras in school zones save lives,” said **Assembly Member Deborah J. Glick**. “The State Senate used the safety of children as a political bargaining chip and is planning on letting every single speed camera go dark after July 25th. The Senate should correct this outrageous failure of leadership and go back to Albany immediately and reauthorize this program.”

“As these newest statistics continue to demonstrate, Vision Zero has succeeded in saving lives and a key component of that success has been the speed camera program,” said **Assembly Member Steven Cymbrowitz**. “It is imperative that this initiative is renewed so that our streets remain as safe as possible for children, seniors and all residents of our city.”

“Four words: speed cameras save lives,” said **Assembly Member Jeffrey Dinowitz**. “There is no coincidence that NYC had the fewest ever traffic fatalities in the first half of 2018 as our speed camera program has stepped up enforcement of traffic safety regulations in school zones. The Assembly passed a renewal of this literally life-saving program before we adjourned for the summer and I find it abhorrent that the State Senate has abdicated their responsibility to protect New York’s schoolchildren by making their support contingent on entirely separate proposals. I support speed cameras because they work and because I would rather protect the rights of children to get to school safely than the rights of a reckless driver to break the law.”

“Under Vision Zero, New York City has witnessed a continued decline in traffic fatalities year-after-year,” said **Assembly Member Dan Quart**. “Our speed camera program is a proven, effective way to keep our children and neighborhoods safe. This year’s data shows how crucial it is to allow this program to renew and expand.”

“New York City has made so much progress reducing traffic fatalities and so much of that progress can be credited to the use of speed cameras,” said **Council Member Donovan Richards, Chair of the Public Safety Committee**. “Every life lost is a tragedy, which is why it is critical that our state legislators return to Albany to renew the program and protect New Yorkers from the next tragic accident. I’d like to thank Mayor de Blasio, NYPD Commissioner O’Neill and DOT Commissioner Trottenberg for their dedication to Vision Zero and the safety of all New York City residents and visitors.”

"Children's safety is a top priority of Vision Zero, and to reach our goal, we must use every tool at our disposal to protect our kids — especially around our schools,” said **Council Member Margaret S. Chin**. "Part of the City's success in declining traffic fatalities is owed to the hundreds of speed-cameras stationed at school zones across the City. Our children's safety should not be up for debate. I call on Albany to take action to renew and expand this life-saving program before these cameras go dark."

“A single death is still one too many,” said **Council Member Costa Constantinides**. “The numbers demonstrate Vision Zero is working. Part of our equation here has been speed cameras, a proven deterrent for reckless driving, especially in school zones. The State Senate needs to stop playing politics and ensure these life-saving devices continue protecting our communities.”

"Mayor de Blasio's Vision Zero initiative has made New York City's streets safer for everybody," said **Council Member Ben Kallos**. "If Albany lets the speed-camera law expire, we will be taking one major step back from the progress we have made. The speed-camera law should be extended and expanded so it can continue to save New Yorkers' lives."

“Thanks to the good work we’ve done through Vision Zero, the first half of 2018 had the fewest traffic fatalities on record, but we still have a long way to go to reduce reckless driving and prevent traffic fatalities,” said **Council Member Brad Lander**. “Last month, I introduced the Reckless Driver Accountability Act to make sure the top most dangerous drivers, the ones who accumulate 5 or more traffic violations each year, are held accountable and are required to take a driver accountability course so they do not continue to use their cars as weapons against their neighbors. Albany must also act immediately to re-authorize life-saving school-zone speed cameras, which the Senate GOP failed to renew before they adjourned for the summer. To protest their inaction, particularly on the part of State Senator Marty Golden who is a leading voice against the program even though it is proven to save lives, I got arrested outside his office while participating in civil disobedience with Families for Safe Streets. There is still much more to be done before we can reach Vision Zero, but I thank Mayor de Blasio and the administration for their work in getting us closer.”

“As we celebrate safer streets, it is important to recognize that speed cameras are vital to continuing this positive trend,” said **Council Member Keith Powers**. “Speed camera technology stands to protect our youngest New Yorkers and contribute to safe roads - a win-win. I commend the Mayor, DOT, and NYPD for a continued focus on Vision Zero and call for the State Senate to return to session in the name of safety.”

Our continually improving record of road safety is the result of several initiatives, including speed cameras,” said **Council Member Debi Rose**. “Over the last several years, I have seen firsthand how speed cameras have slowed motorists down around our schools. This is a life-or-death issue, backed up by data and endorsed by the NYPD. For the safety of students who walk to school and their families, I call on our state legislators to reconvene and give us in City government the necessary authorization to keep our students safe.

"We clearly have the tools to prevent many of the senseless tragedies in which pedestrians are struck by cars, and have made tremendous progress in 2018 so far,” said **Council Member Helen Rosenthal**. “We should go much further and expand our speed camera program, which has already been shown to reduce speeding in school zones by almost two-thirds. What more do we need to know than three-quarters of New York City children who are killed or severely injured in a traffic crash were struck in situations where a speed camera could not be activated. I am joining with our Mayor and thousands of New Yorkers to urge the State Senate to return to Albany, and both renew and expand the life-saving speed camera law.”

“Too many lives have been lost to senseless accidents and I applaud this City and its Administration for the progress that has been made in reducing traffic fatalities,” said **Council Member Paul Vallone**. “Now is the time to continue building upon that progress and I’m proud to join the call to Albany to extend and expand the speed-camera law.”

“The City must utilize every tool we have to improve the safety of our streets and speed cameras have proven to be one the most valuable tools we have to deter dangerous speeding throughout the City. The Senate should not only approve the renewal of the speed camera enforcement program - the Senate should expand the program to cover more locations in every borough,” said **Council Member Andrew Cohen**.

“This is a great achievement and I commend Mayor de Blasio for his commitment to keeping New Yorkers safe both on and off the road,” said **Council Member Carlos Menchaca**. “As a bicyclist myself, I know how important it is to know the City prioritizes the safety of everyone who uses the City’s streets. Moving forward, as we rightly celebrate this achievement – and give credit to the NYPD, DOT and other supporting agencies – let us use it as inspiration to do even better, especially for residents living and traveling in Brooklyn and the City’s more vulnerable communities.”

"It's not a coincidence that New York City has seen traffic deaths falling year over year since speed safety cameras were installed," said **Paul Steely White, Executive Director of Transportation Alternatives**. "These cameras are saving lives, we must not let them be turned off because of petty politics. It's a simple proposition. Do we want to continue to prevent death and injury on our streets, or don't we?"

"It is simply outrageous that a few elected officials are playing politics with New Yorkers' lives. As I know all too well, human life is too precious to be a bargaining chip," said **Amy Cohen, founding member of Families for Safe Streets**. "The Senate Republican leadership must do the right thing and reconvene immediately before this proven life-saving measure is allowed to lapse."

“We urge the State Senate to renew and expand the Speed Camera Enforcement Program to keep our children safe,” said **Angela Pinsky, Executive Director of the Association for A Better New York**. “We know that speed cameras play a crucial role in decreasing the number of accidents and protecting our kids on their way to and from school.”

“Speed cameras are saving lives in New York City - mainly by protecting children and families on their way to school,” said **Tom Wright, President of the Regional Plan Association**. “Reauthorizing this bill is a moral imperative and a vital part of making our city healthier and safer. Politics should not get in the way of saving lives on our streets.”

“We are pleased to see that the continued success of the Vision Zero program has helped New York City become safer,” said **Marcia Bytryn, President of the New York League of Conservation Voters**. “Increased speeding enforcement due to speed cameras helps save lives and makes our streets more pedestrian-friendly, bringing along environmental benefits. We join

the call for the extension and expansion of the city's speed camera program by the state legislature before it expires.”

For more information about the de Blasio Administration’s Vision Zero initiative, please see www.nyc.gov/visionzero.

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