

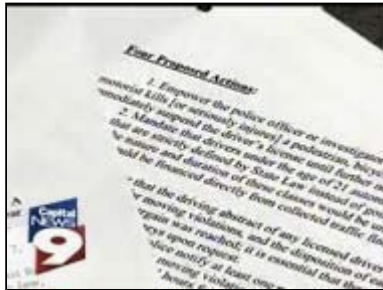
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Friends proposing Ryan's Law

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By: Emily Riemer

Walt Cicha said his last goodbye to his friend David Ryan last June, but he's kept the man in his thoughts often while working on a proposal in his name.



Cicha said, "There are some, let's use the word, limitations that we feel could be optimized. We could improve the safety."

There are four parts to Ryan's Law. First, an offending driver's license could be revoked immediately at the scene of a fatal or near-fatal accident. Second, after a first offense, drivers under 21 must pass six months of driving awareness classes. Third, parents would get a phone call from police anytime an underage driver got a ticket. Finally, all charges would be included in a driver's record.

Saratoga County DA Jim Murphy said, "I think it's a tremendous opportunity for us to move forward to help make our streets safer."

Murphy said the county already makes young drivers attend safe driving classes after receiving a ticket, if they want a that fee reduced. Brand new drivers also receive a packet at the DMV, with a contract for parents and kids, as well as a consent withdrawal form.

Murphy said, "A parent can revoke or suspend his or her child's driving permit if they fail to come home on time, if they find that they're speeding, if their grades aren't good, or for whatever reason."

Cicha is quick to point out that this new law is not about punishing younger drivers, but about trying to prevent serious accidents. He believes David Ryan would have supported this kind of measure.

Cicha said, "I want to create something positive out of this tragedy because I really believe that David would be 100 percent behind it if he was alive, had it been someone else."

Cicha will formally present the proposal at a symposium at UAlbany in March.

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