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## Rep. Diehl endorses road safety effort

**Wicked Local Abington**

Posted Aug 25, 2011 @ 09:40 AM



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Abington — Rep. Diehl is helping to lead a campaign on Beacon Hill to get dangerous drivers off the road, following a fatal hit-and-run in Taunton involving a driver whose license had been suspended or revoked 16 times in the past 22 years.

The recent arrest of habitual traffic offender and road menace Paul Baran has prompted Diehl to join with Senate Minority Leader Bruce Tarr, R-Gloucester, House Minority Leader Brad Jones, R-North Reading, and members of both the Senate and House GOP caucuses to file legislation providing the Registrar of Motor Vehicles with the tools to adequately punish convicted habitual traffic offenders. The proposal calls for longer

suspensions for repeat offenders, including a lifetime license revocation for the worst violators.

Diehl said, “We have a responsibility as licensed drivers to share our roadways in a safe manner but when that public trust is breached time and again, it is incumbent upon us as legislators to allow law enforcement officials to eliminate repeat offenders from the equation for longer periods of time. This legislation does just that.”

“Drivers who repeatedly violate the law after having their license revoked are not only abusing the system, they present in many cases a serious threat to public safety. The Registrar and other officials need the tools to keep such drivers off the road for more than four years at a time, and this legislation will provide them,” said Tarr.

“In light of recent events, this legislation must be moved now,” said Jones. “The public can no longer be put in danger by these drivers who should clearly not be on the road. By providing stronger tools to state and local officials, hopefully we will prevent any further tragedies of this magnitude.”

Current law defines a habitual traffic offender as someone convicted of three enumerated offenses (including driving while intoxicated, reckless driving, making a false statement in an application for a learner’s permit or driver’s license, leaving the scene of an accident, operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license, driving without a license and the use of a vehicle while committing a felony) and/or has committed 12 other general traffic offenses carrying a license suspension of 30 days or more. The bill filed today would create a tiered system of suspensions for habitual traffic offenders by adding to the existing habitual offender law two new categories, Level 2 and Level 3, with progressively increasing periods of license revocation.

Specifically, the bill would:

Increase the minimum period for license revocation for a first-time habitual traffic offender from four to five years;

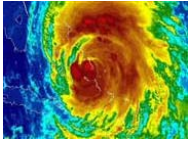
Create a Level 2 habitual traffic offender classification for individuals who have already had their license revoked for being a habitual offender, making them subject to a second revocation from five to 15 years; and

Create a Level 3 habitual traffic offender classification that provides a potential lifetime ban for offenses for more serious repeat offenders who have had previous suspensions; and provide the Registrar of Motor Vehicles the authority to attach terms and conditions as the Registrar deems necessary if and when returning a license to any level habitual traffic offender.

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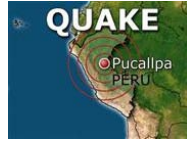
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