

Gov. Pritzker Signs Package of Legislation Protecting Law Enforcement, First Responders and Road Workers

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ROCKFORD – Governor JB Pritzker signed a package of legislation to strengthen penalties for life-threatening violations on roadways in an effort to protect law enforcement officers, first responders and road workers.

“Since 2002, Scott’s Law has said that drivers approaching a vehicle with their hazard lights on must slow down and move over. This is not optional. This is how we keep our heroes and first responders as safe as possible in their line of work,” said Gov. JB

Pritzker. “This new and enhanced law protects those whose employment requires them to pull over on the highway. No policy will ever make restore the families of Trooper Gillen, Trooper Jones-Story and Trooper Lambert, nor will the loved ones of the construction workers or emergency responders killed on the job ever feel that their lives are made whole again. But with these laws, we are cementing our state’s commitment to safety: helping to protect the people who make our world better, our lives easier and our families safer.”

Several state troopers have lost their lives this year on the state’s roadways; two were killed when drivers violated Scott’s Law. The package of legislation honors the memory of Troopers Christopher Lambert, Brooke Jones-Story and Gerald Ellis, and the new law seeks to save more lives of the brave public servants who risk their lives to serve the people of Illinois.

Senate Bill 1862

Strengthening Scott’s Law

To prevent fatalities on Illinois roadways, SB 1862 expands Scott’s Law to cover more workers and enhances penalties upon violation.

The new law extends Scott’s Law protections to include a stationary authorized vehicle with oscillating lights, first responders, IDOT workers, law enforcement officers and any individual authorized to be on the highway within the scope of their employment or job duties.

It also increases the minimum fine to \$250 for a first violation of Scott's Law and to \$750 for a second or subsequent violation as well as adds \$250 assessment fee for any violation of Scott's Law which will be deposited into a new dedicated fund to produce driver education materials, called the Scott's Law Fund.

Criminal penalties will increase to a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by up to one year in jail, if violation results in damage to another vehicle or a Class 4 felony, punishable by up to one to three years in prison, if violation results in an injury or death of another person. Under the new law, an aggravating factor will be added to reckless homicide charges if Scott's Law was violated.

The Secretary of State is also required to include written question on Scott's Law in the driver’s license test.

The law takes effect immediately.

Senate Bill 2038

Creating the Move Over Task Force

To study the causes of violations and ways to protect law enforcement, emergency responders and residents of the state, SB 2038 creates the Move Over Task Force, made up of 20 members.

Members of this task force will include:

the Director of Illinois State Police (ISP) or his or her designee, who serves as Chair
the Governor of Illinois or his or her designee
the Secretary of State or his or her designee
the Secretary of Transportation (IDOT) or his or her designee
the Director of the Illinois Toll Highway Authority or his or her designee
the President of the Illinois State's Attorneys Association or his or her designee
the President of the Illinois Sheriffs' Association or his or her designee.
the President of the Illinois Fraternal Order of Police or his or her designee;
the President of the Associated Fire Fighters of Illinois or his or her designee;
one member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives;
one member appointed by the President of the Senate;
one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate; and
the following to be appointed by the Governor:
two representatives of different statewide trucking associations;
one representative of a Chicago area motor club
one representative of a Chicago area transit safety alliance
one representative of a statewide broadcast association
one representative of a statewide towing organization
the chief of police of a municipality with a population under 25,000.

Members of the Task Force must serve without compensation and must meet no fewer than three times. Additionally, the Task Force must present its report and recommendations to the General Assembly no later than January 1, 2020.

The law takes effect immediately.

Senate Bill 1496

Increasing Construction Zone Fees

To keep workers safe as they rebuild our roadways, SB 1496 increases penalties for violations in construction zones.

The new law sets a penalty of between \$100 and \$1,000 for a driver who disobeys traffic-control devices within designated highway construction zone or maintenance zone and increases the penalty cap for a person who violates the rules on entering a construction or maintenance zone when workers are present from \$10,000 to \$25,000.

The law takes effect January 1, 2020.

“There is no reason why officers and first responders can’t be safe while addressing an incident on the side of the road,” said Assistant Senate Majority Leader Antonio Muñoz (D-Chicago). “It needs to be second nature for drivers to slow down and move over whenever any vehicle is stalled on the side of the road.”

“The rapid increase just this year in those being hit or fatally killed is extremely concerning,” said Sen. Dan McConchie (R-Hawthorn Woods). “We must properly educate drivers to slow down and move over when approaching emergency vehicles, highway maintenance, tow trucks or other vehicles and personnel on the side of the road.”

“The men and women who are our first responders deserve to be protected while doing their jobs,” said Assistant House Majority Leader Jay Hoffman (D-Belleveille). “The tragic deaths over the last year require us to do everything we can to educate the public that they must “move over” and, if they don’t, they will face increases penalties. Our first responders and their families have earned that from us.”

“Today with Gov Pritzker leading the way, we send a clear message to the first responders of Illinois and their families: we care about you and we want you to make it home safely,” said Rep. Marcus Evans (D-Chicago). “With so many distractions in the vehicle nowadays, we need to stress roadway safety.”

“Our law enforcement officials put their lives on the line every single day,” said Rep. Mark Batinick (R-Plainfield). “We need to work hard to stop these needless tragedies from happening again.”

“These new laws represent the good that happens when members of the General Assembly work together in good-faith on a bipartisan basis,” said Rep. John Cabello (R-Machesney Park).

“Our hope is that the changes included in this legislation will help stop the accidents that could and should be avoided,” said Sheriff David Clague, President of the Illinois Sheriffs’ Association. “We believe that the changes signed into law will help better protect our emergency responders and all those on the roads of Illinois.”