

Senate Transportation Committee

Vivian Hall 271-3091

SB 273-FN, relative to motorist duties when approaching highway emergencies involving a stopped or standing vehicle.

Hearing Date: February 11, 2025

Time Opened: 1:45 p.m.

Time Closed: 1:55 p.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Ward, Ricciardi, McConkey and Fenton

Members of the Committee Absent : Senator Prentiss

Bill Analysis: This bill adds stopped or standing vehicles as highway emergencies requiring approaching drivers to give a wide berth.

Sponsors:

Sen. Fenton

Sen. Gannon

Sen. Lang

Sen. Watters

Sen. Innis

Sen. Long

Sen. Altschiller

Sen. Perkins Kwoka

Sen. Birdsell

Sen. Rosenwald

Sen. Ricciardi

Rep. Crawford

Rep. Sykes

Rep. T. Walsh

Rep. D. Fox

Rep. Gorski

Who supports the bill: Senators Donovan Fenton, Debra Altschiller, and William Gannon; Representative Janet Lucas; Lieutenants Chris Storm and Joe Ronchi, New Hampshire State Police; Dan Bennett, New Hampshire Auto Dealers Association; Frank Campo, President, New Hampshire Troopers Association; Dan Goodman, Manager, Public Affairs, AAA Northern New England; Gordon Springate; Sarah McCarthy.

Who opposes the bill: Julie Smith

Who is neutral on the bill: None.

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Senator Donovan Fenton, District 10

- Senator Fenton announced Senate Bill 273-FN will be named "Cheryl's Law" in memory of Officer Jesse Cheryl, who lost his life on I-95.

- Cheryl's Law would enhance the existing Move Over Law, clarifying motorists' responsibilities when encountering a stopped or standing vehicle on the roadside.
- Motorists would be required to reduce speed, use warning signals, change lanes when safe, follow authorized personnel directions, and move over for any stopped vehicle to ensure safety.
- Senator Ward noted a similar bill was discussed last year. Senator Fenton clarified the previous bill did not pass in the New Hampshire House.

Lieutenant Chris Storm and Lieutenant Joe Ronchi, New Hampshire State Police Department

- Lieutenant Storm expressed that this bill held great emotional significance for them, as they were testifying in honor of Jesse Cheryl and his family.
- He emphasized that the proposed bill is a common-sense measure aimed at creating safer roadways.

Dan Goodman, Manager of Public Affairs for AAA Northern New England

- Mr. Goodman explained that the bill would reduce auto accidents and fatalities by clarifying the Move Over Law, requiring motorists to slow down for all vehicles.
- Last year, 350 people, including 23 roadside construction workers, were struck and killed while on the side of the road.

Peter Lanciano, Tow Truck Driver

- Mr. Lanciano shared a photo of his personal vehicle, which bears the names of individuals who have tragically lost their lives in roadside accidents.
- He believes this bill will significantly improve the safety and protection of all New Hampshire residents on the side of the road.