



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

## Lanza & Cusick Introduce Legislation to Help Restore School Bus Service for Staten Island Students

ANDREW J LANZA    October 13, 2011



### **Bill exempts New York City from “Like Circumstances” Clause in Education Law**

Today, Senator Andrew Lanza and Assemblyman Michael Cusick introduced legislation granting cities with population's of 1 million or more an exemption from the *like circumstances* clause in Section 3635(1) (c) of the Education Law. An exemption would allow the city to restore the yellow bus service on Staten Island to its pre-September 2010 form. Recently, a judge ruled that the *like circumstances* clause of the Education law would bind the city to provide

additional busing all over the city, and according to the Department of Education, would create a significant burden on the city's education budget. "Yellow buses are a necessity, not a luxury for Staten Island students," said Senator Andrew Lanza. "Our children live further away from school, on average, than any other students in New York City and we have fewer public transportation options, sidewalks and traffic signals. "Any monetary savings have clearly been outweighed by the impact these cuts have had on Island families and the safety of our children."

"We are going to make every effort we can to restore the yellow bus service to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders on Staten Island," said Cusick. "This bill should ease some of the concerns expressed by the Department of Education with regard to *like circumstances*".

In September of 2010, the City of New York pulled a variance that allowed 7th and 8th graders on Staten Island to be eligible for yellow school bus service. The New York City Department of Education normally provides school bus service to students only through sixth grade, but has the power to grant a variance to seventh and eighth-graders. Over the past 18 years, variances have been granted to 70 schools where the options with respect to public transportation are limited. The city Department of Education eliminated school bus service to students in seventh and eighth-grades affecting 4,600 students at public, private and Catholic schools city-wide. Of those students, 2,940 live on Staten Island where mass-transit options are limited.

"Staten Island does not have the public transportation option that the other boroughs have, and walking to school can be a serious hazard" said Cusick. "I will continue to work with the city every step of the way until we come to a feasible solution for our students."

The bills are expected to be referred to the Education committees in both houses.