



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Dean G. Skelos

Senate Passes Bills to Promote Bus Passenger Safety

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Legislation Would Prevent Sex Offenders from Becoming Bus Drivers & Strengthen Penalties for Passing Stopped School Buses

The New York State Senate today passed two bills that would enhance the safety of bus passengers by preventing registered sex offenders from becoming bus drivers and increasing penalties for passing a stopped school bus.

Legislation (S.1519) sponsored by Senator Carl L. Marcellino (R-Syosset) would prohibit a registered sex offender from obtaining or renewing a commercial drivers license to operate a passenger or school bus, providing a greater level of protection to the public from these individuals.

“Registered sex offenders should not be operating any buses, plain and simple. Bus operators come in contact with vulnerable individuals and to allow a registered sex offender a greater ability to have incidents of recidivism makes no sense. This legislation remedies the problem,” said Senator Marcellino.

Another bill (S.1878), sponsored by Senator John Bonacic (R,C,I-Mount Hope), provides for a 60-day suspension of an individual's drivers license when the holder is convicted two or more times of passing a stopped school bus within a period of 10 years. This legislation would make the penalties for multiple violations of passing a stopped school bus the same as penalties for drivers convicted of speeding in a construction zone two or more times.

Senator Bonacic said, “From the moment our children leave us in the morning, until the moment they arrive at home, we trust their care to others. School bus safety is an essential part of that trust. We need to ensure appropriate penalties are in place whenever anyone drives dangerously near our students.”

Senate Republican Conference Leader Dean G. Skelos said, “The bills passed today would help schoolchildren and others who count on bus transportation to get them to their destinations safely by reducing potential and preventable dangers. Drivers who overtake stopped school buses should be penalized strongly for jeopardizing the lives of children and families with their carelessness, and sex offenders do not belong in jobs like driving a bus because they could have opportunities to hurt children or others.”

The bills have been sent to the Assembly.

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