



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

## **Senator Fuschillo's Legislation to Improve Safety for Students Passed by Senate**

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Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick) announced that the New York State Senate recently passed legislation he sponsored to help improve safety for students traveling to and from school. The legislation would allow school districts to provide busing to children who would not normally qualify for transportation for safety reasons.

"Each school district knows the needs of their students and the challenges they face. If a district believes that there are children who face safety hazards going to school which could be avoided by providing busing, they should have the authority to make that decision. This legislation would give school districts the flexibility to offer busing to students for safety reasons," said Senator Fuschillo, Chairman of the Senate's Transportation Committee.

Under current law, school districts can choose to provide transportation for children who live within distances less than those required by law (two miles for grades K-8, three miles in grades 9-12), so long as it is done equally to all children in all cases. Districts have no discretion to unilaterally make exceptions for any reason, even for safety. This creates a situation where a student does not qualify for busing, but may have to walk across heavily trafficked highways, such as Sunrise Highway and Merrick Road, in order to get to school.

Senator Fuschillo's legislation (S5394) would give school districts the authority, for safety reasons, to allow children who do not qualify for transportation because they live under the mileage limit to receive busing. Parents would be allowed to petition the school district to provide busing because of a safety hazard. If the school district finds there is a safety need for such busing, it could allow these students to take the school bus from an existing school bus stop where other children are already being picked up and dropped off.