



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

Preventing An Illegal Pass: Murphy's School Bus Camera Act Will Catch Irresponsible Drivers Breaking The Law

TERRENCE MURPHY September 2, 2016

CHAPPAQUA, NY - Parents rely on school buses to safely transport their children to and from school. While the welfare of these children depends heavily upon the operator's ability to drive safely, it also relies heavily on motorists obeying the rules of the road. Too many impatient or careless drivers illegally pass stopped school buses while they are loading or unloading children.

Senator Terrence Murphy has a solution to hold irresponsible drivers accountable for putting young lives in danger. Senator Murphy is proposing the School Bus Camera Safety Act. The bill (S3509C) co-sponsored with Senator Catherine Young, will allow local school districts the authority to approve the installation and use of stop arm cameras on school buses to detect and record vehicles illegally passing or overtaking a school bus. Locally, Senator Murphy has been working across parties lines with New Castle Town Supervisor Rob Greenstein to pass this vital safety measure.

"I am sponsoring this legislation to make sure our kids get to school safely," said Senator Murphy. "Because motorists are rarely penalized for driving around buses, there is little deterring them. The use of school bus safety cameras is necessary to prevent causalities and fatalities caused by dangerous motorists who ignore current laws. The School Bus Safety Act

will increase enforcement of the laws already on the books and will significantly lessen the numbers of violations that continue to compromise the safety of our students."

"As the school year begins, now is a good time to remind everyone about bus safety," said Supervisor Greenstein. "Studies show that motorists all over the state and throughout the country are passing school buses when their stop signs are already out. It is a problem that needs to be addressed for the sake of our children, and this legislation will help affect a positive change. I am proud that Senator Murphy is sponsoring legislation that will put cameras on school bus stop signs."

A one-day survey done by the New York State Association for Pupil Transportation on May 21, 2013 yielded astounding results, underscoring the need for a School Bus Camera Safety Act. The Association found that 236 school bus drivers who participated in the survey in twenty-one rural, urban and small city school districts throughout the state reported 306 illegal passes, representing 1.28 illegal passes per bus in a single day. When factoring the number of buses passed in a state-wide count, the estimated number of illegal passes in New York that day alone was over 64,000.

The proposed legislation would authorize school districts and school bus transportation contractors to install school bus safety cameras, which would engage once the stop arm of the bus is extended and the bus stops to pick up or drop off students.

The bill specifies that the photos only show the front or rear license plate of vehicles while a bus is at a full stop. Members of law enforcement will review the photos and issue tickets. Drivers in violation of the proposed law will then be fined \$250.

The fine will be handled similarly to receiving a parking ticket. Convictions will not result in points on the driver's permanent record and will not affect their insurance rates. Drivers may contest the ticket, but will also be deemed liable for the violation if they fail to respond.

Drivers deemed innocent will have their fines dismissed and the photos will be destroyed within two days after the incident.

The bill, which has bipartisan support in the Stat Senate, is expected to be voted upon when session reconvenes in January.