



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David Carlucci

Sen. Carlucci Calling for Legislation Requiring All School Buses Have Lap/Shoulder Seat Belts

SEN. CARLUCCI June 1, 2018

| ISSUE: **BUS SAFETY**



Senator David Carlucci (D – Rockland/Westchester), Safe Kids Westchester County, and concerned parents gathered at the Peter Brega bus yard in Valley Cottage on Friday calling for all school buses in New York State to have lap/shoulder seat belts and that students wear them.

Sen. Carlucci said in the wake of multiple deadly school bus accidents that school buses need to meet top safety standards.

“This legislation will ensure lap/shoulder seat belts are in new large school buses in New York State and require students wear them at all times while on the bus. The NTSB is telling us seat belts save lives and lessen injuries. New York needs to take this guidance seriously, and lawmakers must make this legislation a top priority,” said Sen. Carlucci.

"Even if it saves one life, it's one life saving. And every life is worth saving," said parent and Clarkstown resident, Bonnie Winograd.

A new report from the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), expected to be released in the coming weeks, found in school bus crashes where there was a severe side impact or high-speed rollovers, lap/shoulder belts could have saved lives or lessened injuries.

The NTSB looked at two recent severe school bus crashes, which combined saw 7 deaths on the school bus and almost all injured, ranging from minor to serious.

From these crashes and their extensive history of investigating school bus crashes, the NTSB recommended for the first time that lap/shoulder belts similar to those found on passenger cars be installed on all new school buses nationwide.

The report further suggested that New York, amend their statutes to “upgrade the seat belt requirement from lap belts to lap/shoulder belts for all passenger seating positions in new large school buses. . .”

In New York State, larger school buses are not mandated to have over the shoulder seat belts.

Sen. Carlucci's legislation will close this loophole by requiring school buses purchased by school districts after July 1, 2019 have the lap/shoulder seat belts.

The legislation will also call for older buses to be upgraded to have the lap/shoulder seat belts beginning on April 1, 2019.

Sen. Carlucci said the legislation goes even a step further seeking to make it law that students actually have to wear their seat belts.

“Seat belts are only part of it though, children must wear them. To this end we must do more to teach our children about seat belt safety and the importance of always buckling up,” said Sen. Carlucci.

According to a report from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) there have been 1,282 deaths of all ages from school transportation-related crashes from 2007 to 2016.

The NTSB has said school buses are the safest way though for children to get to and from school and school-related activities due to the large number of federal regulations that define a school bus and the unique occupant safety system called compartmentalization.

They add school bus seats are designed with closely spaced, high-backed, energy absorbing seatbacks that act as protection for students seated on a school bus, much like eggs in a carton.