



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Carl L. Marcellino

SENATE BILLS BOLSTERING STUDENT SAFETY BECOME LAW

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The New York State Senate today announced that Senate bills improving school bus safety and raising awareness of alleged sexual offenses by school employees have

both been signed into law.

A measure (S2587E, Chapter 207), sponsored by Senator Carl Marcellino (R, Syosset), requires random drug and alcohol testing for all school bus drivers. The measure also increases the amount of time a bus driver can consume alcohol before going on duty and operating a school bus from six hours to eight hours. In recent years there have been a number of incidents of school bus drivers driving while intoxicated with children onboard. Current legislation requires only 10 percent of bus drivers to submit to random drug and alcohol testing. This new law will expand that requirement for all drivers, and requires the Department of Motor Vehicles be notified if a driver fails a test and permanently disqualify a driver from operating a school bus in the future.

Senator Marcellino, Chair of the Senate Education Committee, said, "When a child leaves home and gets on the school bus, no parent should have to worry if their child is safe. It is our responsibility to do everything that we can to put their well-being first. This bill will do just that."

Another measure signed into law (S6597B, Chapter 233), sponsored by Senator Sue Serino (R-C-I, Hyde Park), requires that the district attorney immediately notify the superintendent of schools or school administrator if a sexual offense allegation has been filed against one of their employees. Given the proximity of school district employees -- including custodial, contracted workers, and others -- it is imperative that school districts receive prompt notice to protect children when there are serious allegations involving sex offenses.

Senator Serino said, "No one who has ever harmed a child should ever have the opportunity to work in our schools. While the situation that occurred in Ossining is abhorrent, it spurred the school district, the community, and the state into action to successfully close a potentially dangerous loophole in our law. When Assemblymember Galef and I introduced this bill, it was about making sure that our schools and law enforcement have the tools they need to keep sex offenders out of our schools. I am glad that the Executive recognized the importance of this legislation and I am incredibly proud to see it signed into law today."

Recently, reports surfaced that a custodian working in the Ossining School District was convicted on May 1, 2017 of two misdemeanors and two felonies, including the third-degree rape of a victim under 17. Although the employee was arrested for the crime over a year ago, he continued to work in the school throughout the course of

the legal process where he had regular contact with minors. The school in which the perpetrator was employed was not made aware of the issue until it received an anonymous tip.