



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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GPS in Charter Buses Would Protect Riders

SEN. JAMES GAUGHAN May 17, 2019

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Last April, a charter bus carrying 38 students crashed into a low overpass on the Southern State Parkway, seriously injuring several teens and sending others to the hospital. Unfortunately this was not the first crash nor was it the last.

Over the years buses striking overpasses have become commonplace on Long Island's parkways. The issue? Outdated infrastructure not suitable to the taller trucks and buses of today, errors on the part of bus companies, the drivers who fail to abide by rules meant to keep them off parkways, and out-of-state drivers oft general unfamiliarity with Long Island.

There are legislative changes that the State can make to prevent these tragedies from taking place again. One, is my bill to require a commercial GPS device in charter buses. As I write this, the State Senate is set to vote on this bill, which would provide an important safety tool for charter bus drivers.

Many of the horrific crashes that we've seen were the result of drivers using GPS devices intended for passenger vehicles. Passenger GPS devices fail to detect low overpasses on the parkways, a unique and ever present characteristic across Long Island's parkways.

My bill will fix this by requiring charter buses to use commercial GPS, which alerts drivers to low overpasses, and properly divert the buses to a safe route. It will prevent tragic accidents like the ones that have become too common on the Northern State and Southern State Parkways in recent years and ensure the safety of bus passengers.

Other measures like warning signs and the installation of an electronic warning system along parkway entrances are smart and should be expanded. But drivers need to bear responsibility, particularly when they are carrying buses full of passengers, sometimes full of students. An inexpensive commercial GPS system will warn drivers about safer routes and low overpasses.

Less than \$100.

The bottom line is overpass hits need to stop. And this critical step by the State Senate will go a long way towards making Long Island's roads safer.