



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew Gounardes

With schools opening tomorrow, Senator Gounardes and City officials announce expanded NYPD enforcement around schools and continued rapid installation of speed cameras

ANDREW GOUNARDES September 4, 2019

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NEW YORK —With New York City public schools set to open Thursday, **Mayor Bill de Blasio** announced that NYPD would expand traffic enforcement around City schools. At an event in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, **NYPD Transportation Chief Thomas Chan** and Department of Transportation Borough Commissioner Keith Bray joined State Senator Andrew Gounardes to remind drivers about the expanded school zone speed camera law, and announce that after New York City's new speed camera law took effect in July, more than 198,000 violations were issued that month. They made the announcement at a new speed camera location near Fontbonne Hall Academy in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. Despite being close to Fontbonne Hall and two other schools, the camera would not have been allowed under the previous law.

"With schools reopening, we're doubling down on our effort to protect the most vulnerable among us: our kids," said Mayor de Blasio. "With more officers patrolling around schools and hundreds of new speed cameras coming on line in the months ahead, reckless drivers will hear one thing loud and clear: slow down or pay the price."

“The NYPD wants to wish all students, parents, and school staff a safe, productive, and happy school year,” said Thomas Chan, the NYPD’s Chief of Transportation. “In order to help realize that wish, the Police Department will take the steps necessary to protect our children as they return to school, and to ensure that drivers understand that driving dangerously has serious consequences. We remind all drivers that they must obey the traffic rules, drive with vigilance, and yield to pedestrians and bicyclists. Throughout the month of September, the NYPD will be assigning officers for the enforcement of safety violations, including speeding, failure to yield to a pedestrian, texting while driving, and illegal cell phone use. This enforcement will be conducted citywide, 24 hours a day. Coupled with the speed camera enforcement, we expect that our efforts will help deter the bad driving behaviors which all too often have been the cause of traffic collisions that have produced not only injuries, but deaths.”

“As students get ready to head back to school tomorrow, we are here today to remind motorists that New York City’s speed camera program expanded dramatically over this past summer,” said **DOT Brooklyn Borough Commissioner Keith Bray**. “With schools open tomorrow, drivers should need little more incentive to drive safely. Thanks to the hard work of lawmakers like Senator Andrew Gounardes, DOT has begun the process of doubling the impact of automated speed enforcement with new life-saving cameras like this one here in Bay Ridge.”

The enforcement plan that the NYPD will be implementing includes the following components:

- Throughout the month of September, additional officers will be dedicated to the enforcement of speeding violations, Failure to Yield to a Pedestrian, texting while driving, and illegal cell phone use.

- Officers will prioritize traffic enforcement in areas used by children traveling to and from school, and in particular those areas that do not presently have speed cameras.
- Variable message boards will be placed at strategic locations to remind the public about the laws regarding speeding and failing to yield to a pedestrian.
- Highway Officers will be conducting enforcement of speed regulations.
- There will also be citywide enforcement against DWI offenses. The NYPD will be working with our District Attorney partners to ensure a successful prosecution of these criminal drivers.
- Motorcycle safety will be prioritized, not only by enforcement against reckless motorcyclists, but also against dangerous driving by other vehicles which cause risks to motorcycles.
- Intersections and corridors that have a large number of pedestrian or bicyclist injuries will be targeted for enforcement of laws regarding failure to yield to a pedestrian and other violations which endanger pedestrians or bicyclists.

In May, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced that over the next two years, DOT would rapidly scale up its speed-camera program, installing new cameras Citywide at a rate of about 40 per month through 2019, and 60 per month in 2020, expecting to reach each of the law's maximum 750 school zones by June, 2020 (zones can have multiple cameras).

A Stronger Speed Camera Law: Authorized by a state law sponsored by Senator Gounardes and signed by Governor Andrew Cuomo on Mother's Day, the new school-zone speed camera law took effect on Thursday, July 11th. According to DOT, after the new law went into effect July 11th, the cameras, which include 200 previously installed fixed cameras and 120 new

fixed cameras, along with 40 mobile cameras, issued 198,700 Notices of Liability in July.

Data show that speeding in zones with a camera declines by more than 60 percent, with over 80 percent of violators not receiving a second ticket.

Other major changes in the law include:

- **Doubling Speed Camera Hours:** Speed cameras now operate year-round on all weekdays between 6am until 10pm, including summer and school vacations. Previously, cameras' hours were variable, and they could only operate during a given school's active hours. DOT estimates that the law's expansion will on its first day double the overall number of hours when speed cameras can issue summonses.
- **Extending Camera Zones:** Cameras' maximum distance from schools was expanded to a ¼ mile radius from a school, rather than the previous restriction that the camera be no more than a ¼ mile of a school along an abutting street. This change to the law allows cameras to be installed near hundreds more schools.

Fines for speed-camera violations remain unchanged at \$50, issued to those who exceed posted speed limits by more than 10 MPH. The notices of liability are issued by DOT via mail to the owner of the vehicle – and are adjudicated at the New York City Department of Finance.

“Speed cameras save lives and keep New Yorkers safe,” said **Lisette Camilo, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services**. “Additional enforcement near schools will help protect kids and build upon the success of Vision Zero in focusing greater attention on road safety.”

“As students head back to school, they and their families will be safer because of the school zone speed camera expansion,” said **State Senator Andrew Gounardes**. “Today, we are reminding drivers to slow down to save lives and know that if they speed in a school zone, there will be consequences. The good news is that most drivers who receive a ticket hear this message loud and clear, and the vast majority never receive another ticket. I am proud that students, parents and guardians who show up to start the school year on September 5th will be better protected because of the new law.”

“I am very gratified that we are beginning this new school year by implementing speed cameras in school zones throughout the City,” said **Assembly Member Deborah Glick**. “In the years since my work on this law began, with the passage of a demonstration program in 2013, locations with cameras saw speeding violations drop more than 60% and traffic fatalities drop by 55%. This year we were able to put children's safety above political posturing and secure this hard-fought victory for pedestrian and cyclist safety by increasing the number of school zones that may operate speed cameras from 140 to 750. New Yorkers want safer streets. There is no reason to tolerate drivers speeding through communities, and especially in school zones. It is positive governing that we expanded this proven program, protecting students, caregivers and school staff from the danger posed by reckless drivers.”

“I applaud the goal of Vision Zero, and recognize that we have a way to go to ensure our streets are safe for pedestrians and bicyclists alike,” said **Assembly Member Mathilde Frontus**. “With schools opening again, it’s imperative that drivers remain extra vigilant for students crossing the street, and exiting from school buses. Increased speed cameras will help reduce accidents around schools, and the NYPD will make sure all drivers are following the rules of the road, to ensure we can all safely enjoy our streets.”

“As we approach the beginning of the school year, hundreds of thousands of students will be returning to the classroom. It is imperative that speed cameras are installed and in operation

by September 5th,” said **Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez, Chairman of the Committee on Transportation**. “I would like to thank the NYPD, DOT, and Senator Gounardes for all the work they’ve accomplished in making this a reality. It is great to hear the City will be doubling speed cameras enforcement hours and extending their vision zone. These enhancements will ensure that our children remain protected throughout the upcoming school year.”

“School starts this week, and I thank Senator Gounardes for his hard work in Albany to make our roads safer,” said **Council Member Justin Brannan**. “I’m also pleased to hear that NYPD is going to step up enforcement. But I’ll say it again: school starts this week. So please, everybody, slow down, whether there is a speed camera nearby or not. We are all responsible for keeping our street safe.”

"For years, we have argued that unbiased automated enforcement technology should be deployed in as many school zones as possible so that all New York City students and teachers would benefit from its ability to curb speeding. Thanks to the work of our city and state leaders, children returning to school this week will be safer than ever before," said Transportation Alternatives Deputy Director Marco Conner.

"We have a culture of recklessness on our streets, but speed safety cameras are the antidote to that recklessness," said Families for Safe Streets co-founder Amy Cohen. "I join parents from across the city who are relieved to be starting this new school year with more streets than ever before protected by this life-saving safety technology. Families for Safe Streets thanks Governor Cuomo, Senator Gounardes, Mayor de Blasio and the Department of Transportation for their leadership in making it safer to walk and bike in the five boroughs."

RELATED LEGISLATION

2019-S4331

- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

Relates to photo speed violation monitoring systems program for school speed zones in the city of New York

March 07, 2019

Senate Floor Calendar

Sponsored by **Andrew Gounardes**

Do you support this bill?
