



NEW YORK STATE SENATE DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY

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Senate Majority Protects Children and Expands School Bus Safety Measures

(Albany, NY) The Senate Democratic Majority passed legislation today that increases penalties for overtaking stopped school buses and expands school bus safety education programs. These bills continue the Senate Majority's commitment to protecting the safety and health of New Yorkers, especially our state's most vulnerable populations. The legislation will add a school bus safety component to driver's education courses, provide more funding to the Comprehensive School Bus Driver Safety Training Council to study and develop proposals to reduce illegal school bus passing, establish a school bus motorist education fund, and increase the penalty for illegally overtaking and passing a stopped school bus.

"Reckless drivers who ignore and break school bus safety laws endanger the lives of our children," **Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins** said. "Increasing penalties and education around school bus safety measures is an important step to ensure that our communities are safer and young people's lives are not put at risk. I applaud the Chair of the Senate Transportations Committee, Senator Kennedy, along with Senator Kaplan and Senator Parker, for leading the fight on this important safety issue."

The school bus safety legislation advanced by the Senate Majority includes:

- **School Bus Safety Violation Increase:** This bill, [S3558A](#), introduced by Senator Tim Kennedy, Chair of the Transportation Committee, increases the penalties for illegally overtaking and passing a stopped school bus.
- **School Bus Safety Drivers Education:** This bill, [S2960](#), sponsored by Senator Anna Kaplan, adds a school bus safety component to the pre-licensing driver's education course.
- **School Bus Education Fund:** This bill, [S4385](#), sponsored by Senator Kevin Parker, provides for the transfer of a portion of fines issued for illegally passing a school bus to the comprehensive school bus driver safety-training program for the study and promotion of issues involving school bus safety and establishes a school bus motorist education fund.

Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee and Bill Sponsor, Senator Kennedy said, "I have met with grieving families and have heard from residents in our communities about tragic accidents that have occurred due to reckless driving. Increasing the penalty for illegally passing a stopped school bus is the least we can do to protect our students. Protecting our students is a top priority for the Senate Majority, and increasing the penalties for endangering the lives of others will help prevent tragedies and make our communities safer. I want to thank Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and my colleagues Senator Kaplan and Senator Parker for advocating the increase of school bus safety measures."

Bill Sponsor, Senator Anna M. Kaplan said, "As lawmakers, we have a solemn duty to ensure that we take every step necessary to ensure the safety of the children in our communities. So when we have a situation where an estimated 40,000 drivers in New York are illegally passing school buses each day, we have a crisis on our

hands that demands attention. That's why I'm proud to sponsor legislation that will ensure that driver education and licensing exams ensure that drivers in this state understand the laws on school bus safety."

Bill Sponsor, Senator Kevin Parker said, "It is our responsibility to protect children and keep our communities safe. Illegally passing a school bus is a threat to children and adult pedestrians alike. We cannot allow this blatant disregard for safety to continue. I am proud to sponsor this bill that will minimize these risk-taking behaviors and hold drivers accountable."

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