



NEW YORK STATE SENATE DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY

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Senate Democratic Majority Passes Strong Transportation Safety Laws

(Albany, NY) The Senate Democratic Majority passed legislation today to help prevent tragedies by making New York roads and waterways safer. The bill package passed by the Senate Majority includes a bill to allow the use of stop-arm cameras on school buses to capture dangerous drivers who put students and pedestrians at risk. Additional legislation passed by the Senate Majority includes bills requiring all backseat passengers to wear a seatbelt, making boating safety courses and exams a prerequisite to operate on navigable waters (Brianna's Law), and regulations to improve school and charter bus safety.

"The legislation passed by the Senate Majority will improve safety on roads and waterways and save New Yorkers' lives," **Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins** said. "Many of these common sense bills were held up for years, and it took the new Senate Democratic Majority to finally bring them to the floor for a vote. I commend Senate Transportation Committee Chair Tim Kennedy and all of the bill sponsors for taking leadership roles on this critical issue. The Senate Democratic Majority will continue to advance common sense legislation to protect New Yorkers' rights and safety."

The transportation safety legislation advanced by the Senate Majority includes:

- **Stop-Arm Cameras:** This bill, [S.4524-B](#), introduced by Chair of the Transportation Committee, Senator Tim Kennedy, increases pedestrian safety by allowing cameras to impose liability on owners of motor vehicles for overtaking and passing school buses.
- **Bus Driver Hiring Accountability:** This bill, [S.3557](#), introduced by Chair of the Transportation Committee, Senator Tim Kennedy, will increase penalties for bus companies that fail to notify the Department of Motor Vehicles when the bus company employs a driver with felony conviction related to use of a motor vehicle, an impaired driving related conviction, reckless driving, or leaving the scene of an incident.
- **Strengthening Complete Streets:** This bill, [S.1549-A](#), introduced by Chair of the Transportation Committee, Senator Tim Kennedy, will incorporate "complete street" design features in resurfacing, maintenance, and pavement recycling projects and further enable safer access to public roads for all users.
- **Enacts Brianna's Law:** This bill, [S.5685](#), sponsored by Senator John Brooks, requires the operators of mechanically propelled vessels to complete a boating safety course. Right now, the requirement only applies to persons born on or after May 1, 1996.
- **Display of Bus Driver Credentials:** This bill, [S.3450-B](#), sponsored by Senator Toby Ann Stavisky, will require the Department of Motor Vehicles to issue new credentials to individuals qualified to drive a bus under Article 19A of the Vehicle and Traffic Law, and require these drivers and the bus companies to display the credentials while on duty and display proof of valid inspection and operating authority to operate the vehicle.
- **Automobile Safety:** This bill, [S.4336](#), introduced by Senator David Carlucci, will require adult passengers in the backseat of motor vehicles to wear a seatbelt.

- **Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety Education:** This bill, [S.5228-A](#), sponsored by Senator Andrew Gounardes, will require new drivers to learn about pedestrian and bicyclist safety as a component of the pre-licensing exam and require it to be a part of pre-licensing education.
- **Standards for Protective Coatings:** This bill, [S.2773](#), sponsored by Senator Leroy Comrie, requires the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the New York City Transit Authority to implement internationally recognized safety standards pertaining to applying and removing coating from bridges, trestles, and elevated subway and railway tracks and stations.
- **Includes School Bus Safety on Drivers' Education Curriculum:** This bill, [S.2960-A](#), sponsored by Senator Anna Kaplan, will ensure that drivers have greater awareness of the law prohibiting overtaking and passing a stopped school bus.
- **Commercial GPS for Charter Buses:** This bill, [S.2978](#), sponsored by Senator Jim Gaughran, will ensure that charter buses use the commercial global positioning system (GPS) navigation while operating in New York to avoid potential overhead strikes on parkways and other low-hanging overpasses.

Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee and Bill Sponsor, Senator Tim Kennedy said, “Every day across New York State, there are 50,000 drivers who decide to deliberately break the law and pass a stopped school bus, putting our children's lives and safety at risk. This is simply unacceptable, and by passing this comprehensive legislation that ensures stricter enforcement of these crimes, we're sending a strong message: if you pass a stopped school bus in New York, you're going to get caught, you're going to be fined, and you're going to be held accountable.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator John Brooks said, “The safety of our waterways in New York is every bit as important as the safety of our roadways. Brianna Lieneck and her family paid the ultimate price from inadequate regulation. Knowing the laws of the waterways is crucial and it is simply a matter of common sense that informed vessel-operators will result in safer waters. I am proud to have sponsored this bill in the Senate and am confident that it will save lives.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator David Carlucci said, “These transportation safety bills will save lives and make our roadways safer for everyone. Proud to sponsor legislation requiring passengers buckle up in the backseat. Data shows people who do not buckle up in the backseat are 8 times more likely to be injured or killed. Let's prevent tragedies before they happen by reinforcing seat belts are necessary wherever you sit in a vehicle.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator Leroy Comrie said, “Improving transportation safety in New York State, whether in our public transit systems, on our roadways, or on our waterways, is a critical priority for me and my colleagues in the Democratic Conference. I am proudly sponsoring a bill that will require that the MTA establish and meet quality control standards for coatings of its rail infrastructure and other assets. This bill will not only ensure better health and quality of life outcomes for New Yorkers, but will also push the authority toward adopting more efficient practices for applying new coatings.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator Jim Gaughran said, “Long Island has been the scene of several high-profile bus crashes due to the use of GPS devices intended for passenger vehicles. Passenger GPS devices fail to detect low hanging overpasses on the parkways. This critical safety bill fixes this by requiring charter buses to use commercial GPS, which alerts drivers to low-hanging overpasses, and properly divert the buses to a safe route. This bill will prevent tragic accidents like the ones that have become too common on Northern State Parkway in recent years and ensure the safety of bus passengers.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator Andrew Gounardes said, “Passing my bill to include pedestrian and bicycle safety in the DMV curriculum is another major step towards making our streets safer. Teaching pedestrian safety and bicycle safety as a prerequisite to obtaining a driver's license will send a strong signal that we value the lives of pedestrians and bicyclists throughout the state. This will create a thoughtful road culture for drivers, pedestrians,

and cyclists alike so that we all can feel safe in their travels. I am proud to sponsor this legislation and thank my colleagues for joining me in making New York streets safer.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator Anna Kaplan said, “I’m all for taking any action we can to protect the safety of our children, and enforcing the law to keep drivers from passing stopped school buses is a no-brainer. By providing better driver education, and adding cameras to school bus stop-arms, we can deter drivers from taking reckless action that could result in a child being hurt or killed. I’m proud to support legislation that will finally take action to address this public safety crisis that puts too many children at risk every day.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator Toby Ann Stavisky said, “Throughout the State, the safety, and well-being of our constituents is our top priority. In my district, Downtown Flushing has some unique problems-pedestrian traffic can be precarious. A number of fatal bus crashes have occurred because of increased private charter bus service. Today we are passing legislation that would offer greater protections to the drivers, passengers, and pedestrians so we can hopefully prevent future accidents from taking place.”

Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. said, “Overall, this package of transportation safety bills seeks to significantly strengthen ‘the rules of the road’ to keep New Yorkers safe when they are walking along neighborhood streets, enjoying a day of cycling, riding on school and charter buses, or otherwise traveling to work, school, the grocery store, or other everyday destinations. I am pleased to support these initiatives, and to help advance a bill I co-sponsor to strengthen the state’s Complete Street Law to ensure safe access to public roads which are being resurfaced, are undergoing maintenance, or are subject to pavement recycling.”

Senator Alessandra Biaggi said, “Public safety is always a priority, especially when a person is traveling or handling a motor vehicle. This suite of legislation serves to create safety measures for New York’s many modes of transportation, ensuring that New Yorkers can keep moving with security.”

Senator Rachel May said, “As a lifelong advocate for bicycle and pedestrian safety, I am proud to support this package of legislation. It is critical that we educate drivers on sharing roads and that we create complete streets for all New Yorkers to utilize. I also want to applaud Sen. Gaughan for his bill to require GPS navigation on charter buses; the 53rd district was the site of a tragic accident in 2010 where a Megabus hit a low railroad bridge, resulting in four fatalities. This legislation will help to prevent those tragedies.”

Senator Shelley B. Mayer said, “I am so pleased to support these important transportation bills that will improve school safety for children and will address the chronic issue of bus traffic on our parkways in Westchester County. Today’s package will require new drivers to learn about pedestrian and bicyclist safety; reinforce driver education to ensure that drivers know that overtaking and passing a stopped school bus is illegal; and require charter buses to use a GPS in order to avoid overhead strikes on low-hanging overpasses. I am proud of our commitment to public safety and infrastructure investment and know that there is even more to be done.”

Senator Jen Metzger said, “Motor vehicle crashes in New York claim over a thousand lives and cost over \$1.5 billion each year. This package of legislation will greatly improve pedestrian, bicycle, and traffic safety, saving lives by focusing on crash and injury prevention through education and proper safety measures.”

Senator Jessica Ramos said, “Northern Boulevard runs through the heart of my district and is a dangerous highway with foot traffic and schools. Over 12 thousand children go to school on or a block away from Northern Boulevard, and we have lost 6 children since 2012 due to drivers’ failure to yield to pedestrians. I know the dire need for stronger transportation safety legislation. I am voting yes on this package of transportation safety bills for the sake of my children and my neighbors.”

Senator James Skoufis said, “Transportation safety, especially for young New Yorkers, ought to be a fundamental element of every community. By updating driver’s education curriculum, requiring new credentials

for individuals driving buses, and increasing liability for drivers who pass stopped school buses, we are passing significant enhancements to address safety on our roads. Commuters across the state deserve to get to work, school, and their neighborhoods without disruption from unsafe drivers. I'm confident that this package of bills will hold dangerous drivers accountable and make sure others on the road can travel safely."

Senator Kevin Thomas said, "New Yorkers deserve to feel safe on our roads. By increasing awareness of school bus and pedestrian safety, and introducing measures that will reduce reckless driving, this package of legislation makes our roadways safer for everyone."

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