



NYAPT

NEW YORK ASSOCIATION FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JANUARY 15, 2018

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NYAPT ENDORSES DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING LEGISLATION

The New York Association for Pupil Transportation today announced its strong support for legislation that is under consideration in the State Senate and Assembly to increase and enhance random testing of school bus drivers for the presence of drugs or alcohol.

Current federal and state laws require that school bus drivers be subject to “random” testing for drugs and alcohol in accordance with rigidly regulated testing procedures. The association, however, has noted technical issues with the testing regimen and seeks to enhance it for school bus drivers in New York State.

Specifically, the Association is supporting S.2587/A.208 sponsored by Senator Carl Marcellino and Assembly Member Donna Lupardo. The bills, which are currently in their respective Transportation Committees for review, would: (1) include so-called Class C school bus drivers to be subjected to the random tests as they are not included under the federal laws; (2) require that all drivers be included in the sample pool from which random tests are drawn to increase the likelihood that a driver will be tested; (3) increase from 6 to 8 hours the period beyond which an individual can consume alcohol prior to driving the school bus; (4) require that failing test results be reported to the Department of Motor Vehicles; (5) institute a one-year suspension of the license of a person who fails a random test; (6) permanently disqualifies and individual from driving a school bus if convicted of driving a school bus while intoxicated.

These measures were originally advocated by NYAPT, among others, following numerous instances of school bus drivers being apprehended for driving under the influence of alcohol. The Association met with the sponsors to urge the introduction of legislation to close the gaps in testing and to make the rules more stringent for school bus drivers.

The Association sees this legislation as helping to assure parents that their children are in safe hands at all times. The tests would also be reassuring for the drivers who can go out on their daily routes knowing that they are not compromising the safety of the children they have on their school buses.

As part of our overall response, association members have received additional training in the FMCSA-regulated “Reasonable Suspicion” protocol that helps them to identify individuals who might not be ready to drive on any particular day. The training, which will be offered again this year, provides tips and tools for recognizing the signs of drugs or alcohol that could affect the safety and safe performance of the individual.

“School bus drivers do amazing work to keep our children safe each and every day of the school year. We trust them with our children and day after day, they earn that trust,” stated Lori-Ann Savino, President of the New York Association for Pupil Transportation, and Transportation Supervisor for the Jericho School District on Long Island. “This legislation helps us and helps them ensure all the Moms and Dads that our children continue to be on the safest ride to school.”

Association Executive Director, Peter Mannella, noted that “this legislation originated with the school bus industry as we looked for ways to police ourselves and to ensure we did not have to explain to the parents and the public why a bus driver had been given the keys to drive a school bus in a compromised condition. That should never happen. We applaud Assembly Member Lupardo and Senator Marcellino for their introduction and advancement of this important legislation!”

[CLICK HERE](#) for a copy of the Association’s *Memorandum in Support* of the Legislation.