



NYAPT

NEW YORK ASSOCIATION FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

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Our future is riding with us!

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

THE NEW YORK ASSOCIATION FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION SUPPORTS

A172 [Gantt] – S3276 [Parker]

To provide a dedicated fund for increased education on school bus safety

The New York Association for Pupil Transportation supports **A172/Gantt—S3276/Parker** that would create a dedicated fund for public/motorist education related to reducing the incidence of motorists passing stopped school buses. This will be accomplished by diverting funds collected in fine surcharges from individuals who are convicted of passing school buses that are stopped with red lights flashing. “Illegal Passing,” continues to be a most urgent concern in the pupil transportation industry.

Each year, motorists passing school buses are responsible for deaths and injuries among our children. In 2004, a car illegally passing her school bus ON THE RIGHT SIDE killed a young 7-year old girl in Central New York. Increasingly, instances are being reported of motorists passing the school bus on the passenger or curb-side! And the risks to students continues with an average of 25 children being struck and injured by passing motorists each year. It becomes critical that we take action to educate the public and to protect our children!

In 2008, NYAPT collaborated with the Governor’s Traffic Safety Committee on a project that placed digital license plate camera on a school bus in Syracuse City School district. That bus was passed at a rate that translates into 80,000 passes per day. In a similar project in 2009 in Canandaigua, Bethlehem and Brewster school districts, we experienced remarkably similar results. Something must be done to address this issue and to get the attention of the motoring public.

Since those studies, we have conducted frequent surveys that all demonstrate high rates of illegal passing by motorists. The most recent Operation Safe Stop Day witnessed some 1,100 tickets being issued by local police to motorists who passed stopped school buses. And our recent school bus driver surveys show an average of 41,724 passes per day in our State. Unacceptable!

The reasons for the high rates of illegal passing are unknown but we suspect lack of knowledge of the law, driver distraction, driver error and more. Clearly, there is a need for increased understanding of motorist attitudes and awareness of the law. Accordingly, every step must be taken to inform the public and increase that level of awareness. ***This bill would provide for both those objectives to be attained.***

We urge passage of this important legislation – **A172/Gantt—S3276 Parker** -- in recognition of the safety benefits it will bring to our schools and our school children. Our children deserve our attention to this problem and our support for this response.

The New York Association for Pupil Transportation is a professional organization comprised of some 600 members, representing school transportation officials in school districts, BOCES, private school bus operators, and public educational institutions across New York State. NYAPT is committed first and always to the safety of the 2.3 million school children we transport to and from school each and every day. We are committed to actively support legislation, regulations and policies that are in the interests of those school children and call upon our State leaders to keep those children in mind during legislative actions.

For additional information, please contact our NYAPT Executive Director, Peter Mannella, at 518-463-4937