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## NEW YORK ASSOCIATION FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

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# NYAPT

*Our future is riding with us!*

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **New York Association for Pupil Transportation Reminds Drivers of the Dangers of Passing a Stopped School Bus as Schools Reopen**

*--Statewide School Bus Driver Shortage May Cause School Transportation Disruptions--*

**Latham, NY** – The New York Association for Pupil Transportation (NYAPT) is reminding drivers to be extra careful this year as school districts begin to reopen across the state. The Association is also alerting parents and caregivers that there could be disruptions to school transportation this year as school districts continue to face an unprecedented shortage in school bus drivers driven by the ongoing demand for workers across the state.

According to a statewide survey of school bus drivers conducted by NYAPT, an estimated 50,000 motorists in New York illegally pass stopped school buses every day school is in session - endangering students and putting their lives at risk.

“Providing New York’s school-age children a safe school bus ride to and from school each day is our top priority, and we urge all drivers to do their part and be extra cautious as schools reopen,” said NYAPT President and Transportation Director at Coxsackie-Athens School District, Ted Nugent. “We are asking drivers to avoid distractions while driving, be aware that school buses are back on the roads, and to always stop when they see those red lights flashing on a school bus because students’ lives depend on it.”

New York State Vehicle and Traffic law requires all vehicles to come to a full stop when approaching a school bus stopped with red lights flashing. Red flashing lights indicate that a child is either boarding or disembarking a school bus. New York state law prohibits the passing of a school bus that is stopped with red lights flashing regardless of your direction of travel, even if there is a multi-lane or divided highway.

Penalties for a first-time offense include a fine from \$250 to \$400, five points on your license and the possibility of 30 days in jail. A second conviction within three years will result in a \$600 to \$750 fine and up to 180 days in jail; while three or more convictions will result in a fine from \$750 to \$1,000, mandatory revocation of your driver’s license, and up to 180 days in jail.

NYAPT Executive Director David Christopher said, “Riding a school bus is the safest way for a student to get to and from school each day, and we hope drivers across the state will do their part to keep it that way.”

NYAPT is also alerting parents and caregivers that the New York school transportation industry, like many other school transportation providers across the country, is still experiencing some levels of shortage in school bus driver staffing. A recent survey of NYAPT membership indicates 60% of respondents need to hire more school bus driving staff.

“While Governor Hochul and the legislature have made important policy changes to assist schools with recruiting and retaining school bus drivers, many school transportation departments are still struggling to address the driver shortage problem,” said NYAPT Executive Director Dave Christopher. “We ask that parents and caregivers who experience delays in school bus service or have transportation routes temporarily eliminated due to lack of drivers, be patient and have back up plans for transporting their children to and from school.”

NYAPT also asks that everyone please be patient with their school transportation personnel who might be feeling the pressures of providing transportation services with limited resources.

*Finally, the Association is urging people who are looking for a rewarding part time job to consider applying to become a school bus driver. The job has many benefits such as a flexible schedule, competitive hourly pay, employer provided health insurance, the ability to be home with your school-age children when schools are closed, and in many cases a generous benefits package.*

*Contact your local school district or private school transportation provider to find out more about becoming a school bus driver.*

### **About NYAPT**

The New York Association for Pupil Transportation (NYAPT) is a statewide organization dedicated to the support, development, and representation of school transportation professionals who are responsible for the safe and efficient transportation of more than 2.3 million school children across New York State. [nyapt.org](http://nyapt.org)

***\*NYAPT Executive Director, David Christopher, is available for media interviews by request.***

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