



**NEW YORK ASSOCIATION
FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION**

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NYAPT

Our future is riding with us!

Memo in Opposition: S.7278 by Senator Ritchie

The New York Association for Pupil Transportation, which represents more than 600 school district transportation departments across the state, strongly and respectfully, **opposes S.7278 by Senator Ritchie** -- AN ACT to amend the education law, **in relation to requiring records of all traffic violation by bus drivers to be provided to parents and guardians upon request.** S.7278 would require school districts upon request of a parent to turnover any and all records of traffic violations and offenses committed in the operation of a motor vehicle – including all records outside the driver’s employment as a school bus driver.

While ensuring the safety of the children who ride a yellow school bus to and from school each day is paramount to our association, the New York Association for Pupil Transportation adamantly believes that this legislation – although good intentioned – will do nothing to protect the safety of school bus passengers. On the contrary, **legislation such as this will unnecessarily divert valuable school district time and resources away from school transportation safety initiatives.**

NYAPT opposes this legislation because every school bus driver in the state of New York is subjected to the highest level of scrutiny before they get behind the wheel of a school bus, **which already includes a review of their driving record**, a thorough background check, random drug and alcohol testing, and qualification by the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles. In addition, **Article 19-A of the Vehicle & Traffic Law requires school districts to monitor the safety record of each school bus driver.** The law requires school districts to remove unsafe drivers if there is evidence that the bus driver has violated applicable provisions of the Vehicle and Traffic Law, included, but not limited to, being involved in an accident due to speeding, reckless driving or driving under the influence of alcohol.

In addition, there are a series of industry tests and steps that an individual must take including physical, written, and visual exams in order to secure the required commercial driver’s license and become eligible to drive a school bus. School bus drivers must also successfully complete an on-the-road skills exam, participate in on-the-job training, and even be able to perform a pre and post trip review of the school bus they drive each day.

Finally, it is widely understood that riding a yellow school bus is the safest way to travel to and from school each day when compared to taking automobiles, riding a bicycle or walking and it is largely because of the high standards and monitoring New York State and our school districts deploy for school bus drivers before and after they become a school bus driver.

Given the reasons outlined in this memo and the significant amount of scrutiny, testing, training and monitoring already required to drive a school bus in New York State, the New York Association for Pupil Transportation feels strongly that this legislation is unnecessary and will only serve to burden our school districts and school transportation professionals.

We hope the legislature understands the redundant and unnecessary nature of this legislation and urge you to oppose S.7278 by Senator Ritchie.