



# NYAPT

NEW YORK ASSOCIATION FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

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*Our future is riding with us!*

## THE NEW YORK ASSOCIATION FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION SUPPORTS

**A458 [Gantt] – S1239 [Parker]**

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

The New York Association for Pupil Transportation supports **A458/Gantt—S1239/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 35 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 readers on a school bus in Syracuse City School district. That school bus was passed on an average of 1.6 times per day for the life of the project, which translates as 80,000 passes per day across the state. 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 pilot 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 1,086 tickets being issued by local police in New York State to motorists who passed stopped school buses.

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 – **A458/Gantt—S1239 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, public and non-public educational institutions and private contractors across the state. NYAPT is committed to the safety of the 2.3 million school children we transport to and from school each day. We are committed to actively support legislation, regulations and policies that are in the interests of the children and we urge State leaders to keep the safety of those children in mind.

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