



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

## Griffo and Smullen introduce legislation allowing school districts to opt out of electric bus mandate

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO February 14, 2024

| ISSUE: **ELECTRIC SCHOOL BUSES; AFFORDABILITY; STATE MANDATES**



New York State Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-C-Rome, and Assemblyman Robert Smullen, R-C-Meco, announced today that they have introduced legislation that will help school districts facing challenges due to a mandated shift to zero-emission buses.

As a result of a mandate passed as part of the 2022-23 state budget, all new school buses purchased in New York must be zero-emission by 2027 and all school buses in operation must

be electric by 2035.

However, many school districts have shared concerns and challenges they are facing regarding their ability to comply with this mandate. Some of the challenges that stakeholders have identified include utility providers being unable to provide adequate power to districts; fiscal challenges related to school bus and charging infrastructure acquisition; and zero-emission school buses not being conducive to long bus routes or cold weather, among others.

Sen. Griffo and Assemblyman Smullen's legislation (S8524/A9183) would provide districts with the option of submitting an opt-out waiver that would permanently exempt them from the provisions required by the zero-emission school bus mandate.

The bill, which would take effect immediately if signed into law, is in the Senate and Assembly's education committees.

"I have heard from many superintendents and school officials who have expressed legitimate concerns about this mandate and how it will affect their districts," **Sen. Griffo said.** "These leaders know what will or won't work for their districts and should have a say in the matter. Politicians in Albany should not be deciding for them. The legislation that Assemblyman Smullen and I have introduced will allow school districts to decide for themselves if they want to or are able to participate in this initiative."

"Our school districts should have a say in their own financial futures," **Assemblyman Smullen said.** "If the electric school bus mandate is fully implemented throughout the state without additional financial support to help offset the costs of this complex transition to all-electric, our children will be the ones who ultimately pay the price. The fiscal impact of not only purchasing new electric buses but also upgrading equipment and garages to charge them

would cost school districts billions, leaving staff and students neglected in the wake of financial hardship. To prevent school districts from facing these challenges, providing an option that will exempt them from complying with this mandate is necessary and justified.”

Sen. Griffo continues to call for a moratorium on the deadlines in the mandate so that the policy can be reexamined, and a more reasonable and realistic approach determined.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2023-S8524**

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- Introduced
  
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
  
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
  
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
  
- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

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Authorizes school districts to submit an opt-out waiver to the commissioner of education authorizing such districts to opt-out of certain zero-emission school bus requirements

February 08, 2024

In Senate Committee [Education](#)

Sponsored by [Joseph A. Griffo](#)

Do you support this bill?