



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George M. Borrello

Senator George Borrello Amendment to Repeal Electric Bus Mandate Voted Down by Senate Democrats

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Reliability and cost concerns keep mounting as mandate deadline approaches

ALBANY, NY – Citing growing concerns over affordability, reliability and safety, Senator George Borrello today advanced a measure on the Senate floor that would rescind the state’s electric school bus mandates and replace them with a feasibility study. The amendment was proposed during debate on S.1448B and was rejected by Senate Democrats.

“A recent news report in the Times Union highlighted the numerous accounts of schools and municipalities around the nation who have invested taxpayer funds in purchasing electric buses only to have them break down shortly after being put in service,” said Senator Borrello. “The Bethlehem school district, just outside of Albany, was among those cited as having reliability problems, with five out of seven electric buses out of commission for repairs.”

“The reliability problem is a major drawback, but unfortunately just one among many when it comes to this still-new technology. These buses carry an exorbitant price tag, not only for the vehicles themselves, but for the needed infrastructure and transmission upgrades, and their traveling range is far less than conventional buses, even in ideal weather conditions,” said Sen. Borrello. “In extreme cold, their traveling range falls by 30 to 40 percent which makes them incapable of running longer rural bus routes, transporting students to athletic competitions and field trips.”

Senator Borrello noted that the amendment he advanced would replace the mandate with a feasibility study that would be required to evaluate electric bus performance in rural, suburban and urban settings. He added that it represents a “common sense step” that should be taken before any large-scale mandate.

“I am disappointed that my Senate Democrat colleagues rejected my amendment, particularly as more information comes to light about the mechanical and cold weather problems associated with these vehicles,” said Senator Borrello. “Not only is it irresponsible to commit billions in taxpayer funds to an unreliable product, but my colleagues are also overlooking very real safety concerns. Parents trust that when they put their children on the school bus that they will be safe. But what happens when a bus full of students fails mid-route because of cold weather or because they hit a pothole, as was the case with one of the Bethlehem buses.”

“We shouldn’t be jeopardizing our children’s safety for a costly, virtue-signaling political experiment,” said Senator Borrello. “I hope that before the session ends, we can do the right thing and pass this bill.”