



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Dean G. Skelos

Senate Passes School Bus Mandate Relief Act

DEAN G. SKELOS June 17, 2011

The New York State Senate today passed the “School Bus Mandate Relief Act” (S.4434A) to provide schools with budget savings by allowing boards of education to reduce the number of seats provided for student transportation if the seats aren’t being used by students. The measure, sponsored by Senator Jack Martins (R-C-I, Mineola) is expected to save school districts millions of dollars.

The School Bus Mandate Relief Act was introduced in response to a call by school districts for relief when it comes to state mandates. The bill allows the board of education of a school district to reduce the number of seats if there is a documented history of the actual number of riders in each in each of the preceding three years, showing a consistent pattern of eligible pupils not using the transportation provided by the district.

“By providing school districts with mandate relief, it’s a win for our taxpayers. All students who are eligible to receive transportation should receive it. But if there is a pattern of some students not using it, school districts should not be forced to incur that expense,” said Senator Martins. “The result will be a saving to our school districts, which will ultimately be a

savings to our taxpayers.”

“School budgets are weighed down by excessive state mandates, and we are committed to identifying and implementing ways to provide relief so that our schools’ priorities can remain on providing quality education,” Senate Majority Leader Dean G. Skelos said. “This bill is one sensible step we can take that will help schools save millions of dollars and cut waste.”

One bus for a high school in Port Washington, Nassau County, has 66 seats, yet only 12 students were regularly riding it. In the Port Washington School District, half the seats in the buses the district provides are empty simply because the district is required to provide the seats regardless of whether the students are using the bus.

As the chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Local Governments, Senator Martins has taken the lead on seeking ways to provide mandate relief to school districts and local governments.

####