



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

## SENATE PASSES PACKAGE OF SCHOOL BUS BILLS - Bills intended to make riding bus safer for students, enhance communication, and make “school bus” signs more economical

ANDREW J LANZA February 7, 2012

Senator Andrew Lanza today voted in favor a series school bus bills that passed the Senate that will ensure child safety and enhanced communication.

A bill was passed that increases the penalties for passing a stopped school bus (S.3099A). The legislation would impose a sixty day suspension of a driver’s license if convicted of passing a stopped school bus two or more times. The bill would also make the penalties for passing a stopped school bus multiple times the same as penalties for drivers convicted of speeding in a construction zone two or more times.

The New York State Senate also passed a bill that would ban certain criminal offenders from working on school buses (S.6157A). The bill prohibits people who are convicted of offenses, such as sex and drug crimes, from being school bus monitors. The bill also bans anyone convicted under Leandra’s Law from being a school bus driver for five years after conviction. Leandra’s Law makes it a felony to drive drunk with others

A third school bus bill was also passed by the Senate relating to “school bus” signs. Currently, school bus signs are required to be illuminated, but this legislation would allow for the signs to be constructed with reflectorized materials. The bill is intended as a cost-saving measure while still supplying the necessary safety precautions (S.4488A).

Advancements in technology have made the illuminated sign requirement on school buses obsolete. Existing technology for photo-reflectorized coatings and graphics similar to those used on traffic signs will allow for signs to be made economically, with industry-standard materials, and offer advantages beyond the illuminated signs.

The current required illuminated signs are more expensive, both initially and to maintain. New York is one of only two states – the other being Maine – that require this feature. Additionally, these lights accumulate snow and ice and are often times found to be the source of water leaks and leading to structural corrosion. Both of these negative externalities can now be avoided with the use of reflectorized coatings and graphics.

“In an effort to better protect our school children, my colleagues and I have introduced a variety of legislation addressing school bus personnel,” said Senator Andrew Lanza. “Under current law, a person convicted of Leandra’s law, could conceivably drive a school bus six months after that conviction, which is completely inappropriate. An individual who is irresponsible enough to drive while intoxicated, let alone with a child in the car, is not an ideal candidate to drive or supervise children on a school bus. Governmet has a moral obligation to provide laws to keep each and every child safe.”

The bills have been sent to the Assembly.