



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

## Senate Transportation Committee to Hold Public Hearing Examining How to Better Protect Children From Drunk School Bus Drivers

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. April 29, 2013

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Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick), Chairman of the New York State Senate's Committee on Transportation, announced today that the New York State Senate's Committee on Transportation will be conducting a public hearing to examine how New York State can better protect children from drunk bus drivers, including whether school buses should be equipped with ignition interlocks. The hearing will take place this Thursday, May 2nd at 10 am in the Campus Center Ballroom at Farmingdale State College, located at 2350 Broadhollow Road in Farmingdale.

The hearing comes after several incidents on Long Island which involved intoxicated bus drivers, including one last October in which a school bus carrying 5 small children crashed into a Syosset home. The driver of the bus pled guilty to charges including aggravated DWI under Leandra's Law and drunken driving.

"Every time a parent puts their child on the school bus, they are entrusting the driver with that child's safety. They have every right to expect that the driver is performing their duties

while sober. Unfortunately, there have been several incidents where children were put in harm's way because their bus was operated by a drunk driver. This hearing will examine what steps New York State can take to prevent bus drivers from even having the chance to drive drunk and protect children who cannot protect themselves," said Senator Fuschillo.

Melissa Escudero, whose son Christian was a passenger in the October bus crash, will be among the speakers expected to testify at the hearing. Representatives from the following organizations and agencies are also expected to participate:

- New York State Association for Pupil Transportation
- New York State School Boards Association
- New York State School Bus Contractors Association
- Nassau County District Attorney's Office
- Nassau County Traffic Safety Board
- Suffolk County STOP-DWI
- Suffolk Transportation Service
- Sens-O-Lock of America, a company which manufactures ignition interlocks for school buses
- Transportation Workers Union Local 252

Discussion at the hearing will include, but will not be limited to: crashes caused by intoxicated bus drivers; whether New York State's current pupil transportation laws should be strengthened to further protect children from drunk drivers; and recent legislation that

would require the installation of ignition interlock devices in school buses.

Members of the public are welcome to attend the hearing and submit written testimony. Oral testimony is by invitation only.