



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

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

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The New York State Senate's Transportation Committee, chaired by Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick), today held 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 follows at least four incidents on Long Island since last October in which drivers were arrested for operating a school bus while intoxicated, including one in which the driver crashed his bus with five young students onboard into a Syosset home. Melissa Escudero, whose son Christian was a passenger on the bus, testified at the hearing.

“Parents entrust their children’s lives and safety to school bus drivers; they have every right to expect and demand that the bus driver is sober. While the vast majority of school bus drivers take their responsibilities very seriously, we have seen others abuse parents’ trust and endanger children by driving drunk. Today’s hearing explored what steps New York State can take to prevent these incidents and ensure that school bus drivers are sober every time they get behind the wheel,” said Senator Fuschillo.

Discussion at the hearing included, but was not 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.

In addition to Ms. Escudero, the Committee heard testimony from:

- Nassau County District Attorney’s Office
- New York State Association for Pupil Transportation
- New York State School Boards Association
- Transport Workers Union Local 252
- Suffolk Transportation Service
- New York State School Bus Contractors Association

- Sens-O-Lock of America
- Coalition of Ignition Interlock Manufacturers
- Nassau County Traffic Safety Board
- Al Belbol, Co-President, Levy-Lakeside Elementary School PTA (Merrick)

Written testimony was also submitted by the New York State Department of Transportation and the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles.

The hearing was held at Farmingdale State College. Copies of the testimony offered by the speakers is listed below.