



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senate Approves Senator Martins' Legislation to Ensure Schools Continue to Save on Their Transportation Costs

JACK M. MARTINS May 20, 2014

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Legislation Would Make School Bus Mandate Relief Act Permanent

Senator Jack M. Martins (R-7th Senate District) announced that the New York State Senate passed legislation he sponsored to ensure school districts continue receiving mandate relief on their transportation costs. The legislation (S3141) would make the savings provided by the school bus mandate relief act permanent.

"The school bus mandate relief act reduced transportation costs for school districts by giving them relief for an unnecessary state mandate, without impacting service. Permanently repealing this unfunded mandate is a commonsense step which would allow districts to continue saving taxpayer dollars. That's exactly what this legislation does," said Senator Martins.

The school bus mandate relief act was authored by Senator Martins and signed into law in 2011. The law amended a burdensome state regulation which forced school districts to provide transportation to every student who was eligible for busing, not just those who used it. As a result, schools were forced to spend taxpayer dollars reserving seats on buses for students who were not using them. In some cases, buses were traveling with only a handful

of children, but the district was unable to combine buses because of the mandate.

The law authored by Senator Martins relieved this unnecessary mandate by allowing school districts to provide transportation only to students who use it after a pattern is established. School districts realized significant savings; the Port Washington School District alone was able to reduce the size of their bus fleet by eight buses and saved approximately \$450,000 in the first year of the law.

This year's state budget extended the original law, which was set to expire at the end of this year, for another five years. Senator Martins' legislation would make the law permanent to ensure that school districts can continue to receive these important savings.

"School boards support allowing districts to base the number of school bus seats available on patterns of actual ridership, rather than strictly on student enrollment at various distances from the schools. This bill would provide continued flexibility, economic savings and added efficiencies for school districts throughout New York State. Here's a perfect example of where mandate relief can provide cost savings for schools," said Timothy Kremer, executive director of the New York State School Boards Association.

"Senator Martins' legislation to make this law permanent supports all school districts' efforts to balance tight finances and allows for funds otherwise allocated for transportation to be redirected to programs for students. The Port Washington School District believes that determining bus runs based on actual ridership is a fair and appropriate way to maintain lower transportation costs and supports Senator Martins' proposal. A return to the former system is not in the best interests of either students or taxpayers," said Port Washington School District Superintendent Dr. Kathleen Mooney.