



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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School Zones

MARTIN J. GOLDEN April 18, 2013

When it comes to pedestrian safety, and specifically the safety of our children, the focus must be on traffic calming methods that result in an increased level of safety. Logically, curbing speed in the immediate area surrounding schools is the most effective.

New York City schools are vast and numerous. In South Brooklyn alone, they are located on both major thoroughfares, like 4th Avenue, New Utrecht Avenue, and Bay Ridge Parkway, as well as less traveled streets, like 85th Street, Ridge Boulevard, and Benson Avenue. With thousands of students coming and going each day, we must look at concise and appropriate measures to curb speeding that may take place around schools.

New York City's major combat to speeding has always been enforcement of existing law. This mechanism has been proven effective and appropriate. However, we must look to specifically curb speeding throughout the areas next to and around schools. Last week, I introduced legislation into the New York State Senate, S4613, to authorize specific measures to help combat speeding around schools, by creating school zones.

In many areas around the country, municipalities rely on these school zones to combat speeding. You see them in Long Island, in Upstate New York, New Jersey, and Florida, just to name a few. School zones identify themselves in several important ways. School Zones have lower speed limits than the surrounding area, calming traffic so to avoid any accidents. School Zones have flashing yellow lights, which would both alert drivers that they are entering a school zone, and that they should decrease the speed of their vehicle. Finally school zones will include traffic calming measures, including speed humps, curb extensions, median barriers, among others. All drivers have experienced the effects speed humps have on reducing the speed of a vehicle.

My legislation would create these school zones across the city of New York, requiring the Transportation Department to post school zone speed limit signs, together with flashing beacons, at every public and non-public school. In addition, the Department of Transportation will be authorized to establish a speed limit of 15 miles per hour on highways passing a school building, or on entrances or exits of a school abutting on highways. These measures, once enacted, should and will be studied for their effects on traffic calming, by requiring the Transportation Commissioner to prepare a report.

By working together to instill sensible wide reaching changes, we can keep New York a safe place to live, work, and raise a family.