



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Elaine Phillips

From the Desk of Senator Elaine Phillips: School Bus Safety Update

ELAINE PHILLIPS September 1, 2017

IT'S THE LAW: STOP FOR STOPPED SCHOOL BUSES
"It's everyone's responsibility to keep our children safe"

Everyone knows that it's illegal—and *very dangerous*—to pass a stopped school bus. Yet, every day drivers are speeding past school buses as they load and unload—putting young children at risk. Earlier this year, I teamed with school bus drivers from across our area in a first-ever survey on school bus safety. In just one week, drivers in seven local school districts reported being passed **an astonishing 778 times!** That's more than 150 times a day!

"It's everyone's responsibility to keep our children safe!"

	FINE	JAIL
1st offense	\$250 - \$400	Up to 30 days
2nd offense*	\$600 - \$750	Up to 180 days
3rd offense*	\$750 - \$1,000	Up to 180 days

*Within three years.

**YELLOW LIGHTS MEAN SLOW DOWN.
THE BUS IS ABOUT TO STOP.
RED LIGHTS MEAN STOP.
CHILDREN ARE GETTING ON OR OFF THE BUS.**



As State Senator, there is no greater issue than protecting the safety and well-being of our children. With September already here, and children going back to school over the next few days, it is a good time to reiterate the importance of school bus safety.

Each day, over 50,000 school buses transport more than 2.3 million children to New York schools. Placing your children in the care of someone else can be unsettling. While one accident is too many, New York's record of school bus safety is among the best in the Nation, partly because of the tough safety standards already in place.

This year, my colleagues and I advanced several measures to increase student safety including increasing fines and penalties for those caught passing a stopped school bus and instituting a school bus safety component to driver's education courses.

Specifically, the Senate-approved measures would:

- Permanently disqualify school bus drivers who fail a random drug or alcohol test;
- Increase penalties for certain vehicles passing a stopped school buses;
- Require anti-bullying training for school bus drivers and attendants;
- Disqualify school bus drivers for certain offenses involving children;
- Prohibit sex offenders from being bus drivers;
- Increase penalties for multiple convictions of passing a stopped school bus; and
- Toughen fines and criminal penalties for passing a stopped school bus.

Nothing matters more than the safety of our children, and these measures will go a long way to ensure that they have access to the safest transportation as possible to and from school each day.

As a reminder, drivers should slow down when they see a school bus with flashing yellow lights. State law requires drivers to STOP when the red lights on a school bus are flashing – no matter if the bus is in the parking lot of a school or on a four lane highway. If the school bus driver waves you on, it is safe to proceed, but not before. Drivers who fail to stop when a school bus has its red lights will face costly penalties in New York State and possibly even serve time in jail.

Enjoy the rest of summer, and help protect the safety and well-being of our children by remembering to slow down and stop completely when approaching a stopped school bus.