



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

## Top ten most dangerous buses operating in New York City revealed in new report

JEFFREY D. KLEIN September 28, 2017

| ISSUE: **DRIVER SAFETY, BUSES, INVESTIGATIONS, NEW YORK CITY**

*After fatal Queens bus crash IDC report details the most dangerous companies; proposes heightened safety record transparency & tougher penalties for bad actors*

New York, NY — Senators **Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester)**, **Jesse Hamilton (D-Brooklyn)**, **Jose Peralta (D-Queens)**, **Marisol Alcantara (D-Manhattan)** and **Tony Avella (D-Queens)**, joined by advocates, on Thursday released a new report, “*Violations by the Busload: An Investigation Into the Most Unsafe Bus Companies Operating in New York*,” listing the top ten bus companies operating in New York City with the worst track records.

Following a fatal bus crash in Queens on September 18 involving a bus operated by the Dahlia Group, the IDC initiated an investigation into the safety records of bus companies that operate within the city. The Dahlia Group made the list, but six companies stood out with even worse safety records.

The members of the Independent Democratic Conference proposed heightened transparency to help riders learn about a company’s safety record online or at a company’s ticket counter. The legislators also proposed tougher penalties to crackdown on companies that fail to disclose hires to the DMV.

“The tragic accident in Queens shed light on the safety violations many companies in this city have, but unfortunately these records are hard to track down. As these unsafe buses continue to roll on our city streets, the public is in the dark about these violations. We want to change that by requiring that they post these records online or at the site of ticket purchase. We also need to put the brakes on bad actors in this business by increasing fines for failure to disclose hires who might have histories of violations like drunk driving to the DMV,” **said Senator Klein.**

“Bus safety is part of public safety. The measures we bring forward today serve to ensure the unsafe practices that contributed to the tragic deaths on September 18th are not repeated. Bus companies need to know the importance of further transparency and full compliance with DMV disclosure rules. That's why I am proud to advance these measures with my colleagues and reassure New Yorkers that their safety is our top priority,” **said Senator Hamilton.**

“The horrific accident that occurred in Flushing highlighted the urgent need to regulate charter bus companies. As elected officials, it is our duty to implement all the necessary safety measures to make sure our roads are safe. The findings in this report are shocking, and this is why we must ensure charter buses don't operate irresponsibly throughout our state. I want to thank the IDC staff and Senator Klein for putting this report together and formulating proposals that will increase safety on the streets,” **said Senator Peralta.**

“The tragic crash last week, which led to the deaths of three people, underscores the urgent need for accountability in our intercity bus service. Passengers and the general population should be able to trust that convicted drunk drivers will not be driving commercial buses on crowded streets. The legislation proposed by the IDC to tighten requirements for bus companies will go a long way toward making sure that our buses are safe and that our bus drivers are well-qualified,” **said Senator Alcantara.**

“There is no question that any person operating a passenger bus should be held to the highest safety standards possible. When people board a bus they do so assuming that their safety is a priority and that they will get to their destination safely. Companies that fail to disclose safety information, especially that of a driver who has a history of unsafe driving, are purposely putting their customers, and everyone who they share the road with, in serious danger. Strengthening the penalties for this dereliction of duty is a good start to ensuring the safety of New Yorkers who put their lives in the hands of bus companies,” **said Senator Avella.**

The report examined 249 companies with inspection data operating in New York with a focus on ten with the worst inspection results, all of which were found to be in the bottom 30 percent of companies nationwide for safety records.

Federal studies show a high correlation between unsafe driving behavior and a higher incidence of crashes. Using data from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) the report found 121 companies with points for unsafe driving violations, 51 of which had received sufficient violations to receive an unsafe percentage value from the agency.

<b>Number of Bus Companies</b>	<b>Unsafe Driving Percentage Level</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>At or below 10%</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>11% to 20%</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>21% to 30%</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>31% to 40%</b>

5	41% to 49%
4	50% to 60%
2	61% to 70%
10	Over 71%

The ten worst companies all had an unsafe driving percentage level greater than 70, with Dahlia Group, the company involved in the fatal Queens crash in the 83rd percentile, or seventh on the top ten list.

Name of Bus Company	Company Address	USDOT #	Unsafe Driving Percentile	Fleet Size Vehicles/ Drivers	Total Violations/ Unsafe Driving Violations	Does it exceed any of the FMCSA Intervention Thresholds?
SAGBUS INC	6006 168TH ST FLUSHING, NY 11365	2839930	99%	1/1	18/4	Unsafe Driving, Hours-of-Service Compliance
YEP TOUR INC	12 HARVARD STREET WORCESTER, MA 01609	2429791	98%	10/28	212/34	Unsafe Driving, Hours-of-Service Compliance, Driver Fitness

<b>NO 1 BUS TOUR INC</b>	<b>21 ALLEN STREET NEW YORK, NY 10002</b>	<b>1955237</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>2/5</b>	<b>24/9</b>	<b>Unsafe Driving</b>
<b>SAFARI TOUR INC</b>	<b>2960 AVENUE T BROOKLYN, NY 11229</b>	<b>2780311</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>2/2</b>	<b>4/3</b>	<b>Unsafe Driving</b>
<b>SOE TOUR INC</b>	<b>800 HINGHAM STREET SUIT 202S ROCKLAND, MA 02370</b>	<b>2410389</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>10/17</b>	<b>50/11</b>	<b>Unsafe Driving, Hours-of-Service Compliance, Vehicle Maintenance</b>
<b>K LINE TOURS LLC DBA: FUNAWAY TOURS</b>	<b>840 NEPPERHAN AVE YONKERS, NY 10703</b>	<b>1202229</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>6/4</b>	<b>33/5</b>	<b>Unsafe Driving, Hours-of-Service Compliance</b>
<b>DAHLIA GROUP INC</b>	<b>127-27 34TH AVENUE FLUSHING, NY 11354</b>	<b>1788395</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>5/6</b>	<b>11/7</b>	<b>Unsafe Driving</b>
<b>EASTERN COACH INC</b>	<b>99 DERBY STREET SUITE 200 HINGHAM, MA 02043</b>	<b>1923882</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>18/29</b>	<b>25/15</b>	<b>Unsafe Driving</b>

<b>VICTORIA'S TRANSPORTATION CO INC</b>	<b>5 DIVISION STREET 2RD FLOOR</b>	<b>1684849</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>15/23</b>	<b>41/12</b>	<b>Unsafe Driving</b>
<b>DBA: VICTORIA'S TOUR &amp; CO</b>	<b>NEW YORK, NY 10002</b>					
<b>JET TOURS USA INC DBA: SIGHT SEEING TOURS</b>	<b>299 MURRAY HILL PARKWAY  EAST RUTHERFORD, NJ 07073</b>	<b>519856</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>12/19</b>	<b>32/4</b>	<b>Unsafe Driving, Driver Fitness</b>

The worst operator, Sagbus Inc., received 18 violations over the period examined despite only having one recorded bus and driver. Violations included two violations for failing to obey traffic control devices and two for speeding, one of which was for exceeding the speed limit by more than 15 miles per hour.

During the 24-month period that the report examined, the second worst offender, Yep Tours, received 212 violations, including 34 for unsafe driving. This included five instances of drivers caught speeding more than 15 miles over the limit and one instance of a driver using a hand-held phone while driving.

The Independent Democratic Conference has proposed a number of legislative solution to ensure that the buses New Yorkers ride on are safe. Proposals include strengthening fines against companies that fail to disclose safety information to the DMV and requiring bus companies to post their driving inspection record on the company's website.

Currently the DMV can impose a fine of between \$500 and \$2,500 for the first violation with the second and subsequent violations resulting in fines between \$1,000 and \$10,000. Under the proposal, those penalties would double if a company failed to disclose the hire of a driver with a drunk driving conviction. Penalties would triple if a company failed to disclose a hire to the DMV and that driver is subsequently involved in an accident that kills or injures a person.

The second proposal would require bus companies to post driving safety records on their website or at its point of sale if the company does not have a website. Information required includes the company's U.S. Department of Transportation identification number, on road performance percentile, summary of safety activities, inspection history and violation summary.

Riders must navigate a complex internet search to track down bus company records, and in many cases need a company's US DOT number, making the vital violation information even harder to find. The proposal would provide heightened, easy to access information online and at bus company counters where riders could buy tickets.