



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Elaine Phillips

Senator Phillips Joins Colleagues To Call For Passage Of 'School Bus Camera Safety Act'

ELAINE PHILLIPS June 12, 2018



Senator Elaine Phillips today joined fellow legislators and officials from the educational, law enforcement and advocacy communities at a press conference to call for passage of the “School Bus Camera Safety Act,” which authorizes the installation and use of stop-arm cameras on school buses to detect and record vehicles illegally passing stopped school buses.

“Ensuring the safety of our children must be our top priority – and with the alarming number of cars that pass school buses daily, something must be done,” Senator Phillips said.

“The School Bus Camera Safety Act will not only deter motorists from passing stopped school buses, but will ultimately save lives. I call on my colleagues in the Legislature and Governor Cuomo to take up this common-sense measure.”

The bill, S.518B, would authorize the use of stop-arm cameras on school buses and would permit evidence taken from the cameras to be used in issuing tickets to violators.

The bill would retain the current financial penalties for stop-arm violations with fines of \$250. Unlike situations with police officers involved, the bill would not impose points or imprisonment for convictions.

Fines would cover enforcement and operational costs of the program, with localities receiving the fines directly, and school districts each receiving a portion as needed to absorb direct costs. Participating school districts would also be required to submit reports on the results of the program.

Studies estimate over 50,000 drivers in New York illegally pass stopped school buses daily. Stop-arm violations are a growing concern throughout the nation, which has prompted many states to enact similar legislation, including Maryland, Connecticut, Georgia, North Carolina, Iowa, Virginia and Washington.

Under current law, only a police officer who witnesses the violation can issue a ticket. This bill permits the evidence taken from school bus safety cameras to be used in prosecuting violators.

Charles Dedrick, Executive Director of the New York State Council of School Superintendents said: “Every superintendent feels a personal obligation to every family to put in place the necessary measures to assure the safety of their children every day.

Unfortunately, the risks to students begin before they enter the school building. Students

are at the greatest risk of harm during their travel to and from the school.”

Peter Mannella, Executive Director of the Association for Pupil Transportation said: “Our association members and all those engaged in school transportation safety are eager for enactment of this important legislation. Illegal passing is a clear and present and daily danger for the 2.3 million children who ride on yellow school buses. They trust adult motorists to obey the law and we need this legislation to help us keep the children safe when motorists don’t Stop on Red.”