

News from Senator Catharine M. Young

57th Senate District

Representing Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, and portions of Livingston County



For Release: Immediate, June 19, 2018

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Bill to Allow Automated Cameras on School Buses Passes State Senate

Measure championed by Senator Young would employ technology to ticket motorists who illegally pass stopped school buses

Albany, New York – Hailing it as a critical step forward, Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I-57th District) announced that the State Senate has passed the School Bus Camera Safety Act, a measure she sponsors. The bill authorizes the use of automated cameras on school buses to record and ticket motorists who illegally pass stopped school buses.

“With upwards of 50,000 illegal bus passes every day, it is crucial that we make this technology available to school districts to help curb this problem and safeguard our children. Implementing stop-arm cameras on buses would have a major impact in reversing this trend. Statistics show declines in violations of between 30 and 50 percent in states that have adopted the cameras,” said Senator Young. “With the passage of this legislation, we are on our way to realizing this goal.”

“I am grateful to my Senate colleagues for their support, to my co-sponsor Assemblyman Magnarelli for his partnership in this fight, and to the New York Association for Pupil Transportation (NYAPT) and its Executive Director Peter Mannella for working with all the stakeholders on this issue to help build consensus,” said Senator Young. “With the clock running out on the session, I urge the Assembly to join us in passing this critical measure before we adjourn. At its core, this bill is about saving young lives, which is a goal that I know everyone supports.”

Currently, motorists who pass stopped school buses can only be issued a ticket if a police officer witnesses the violation. Because it is impossible for law enforcement to patrol every bus stop daily, very few violators face any consequences.

The legislation sponsored by Senator Young, S.518B, addresses this problem by allowing school districts and school bus companies to install automated cameras to detect and capture images of vehicles that fail to stop when the stop arm of the bus is extended to pick up or discharge students. It allows the evidence taken from the cameras to be used by police agencies in prosecuting violators and issuing fines.

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.

“Fifteen other states have already authorized this lifesaving technology,” said Senator Young. “We can, and should, make New York the 16th state, for the good of our children, families and communities.”

The bill now goes to the Assembly.

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