



**New York School Bus Contractors Association**  
Promoting safe, reliable and cost-effective student transportation  
PO Box 268  
Latham, NY 12110

[www.nysbca.com](http://www.nysbca.com)

**For Immediate Release**  
**October 18, 2016**

**Contact: Al Roney**  
518-986-6650  
[al@pcpublicaffairs.com](mailto:al@pcpublicaffairs.com)

## **New York School Bus Contractors Association Supports National School Bus Safety Week: Members Holding School Bus Safety Events Throughout New York State**

**Latham, New York** – The New York School Bus Contractors Association joins with the National Association for Pupil Transportation and the National School Transportation Association in supporting National School Bus Safety Week, an annual event promoting school bus safety.

The New York School Bus Contractors Association is using the occasion to hold a variety of school bus safety events throughout the state and renewing its call for stiffer penalties for drivers who illegally pass a stopped school bus.

“The New York School Bus Contractors Association proudly supports this year’s National School Bus Safety Week and its nationwide effort to promote school bus safety,” said Mike Martucci, President of the New York School Bus Contractors Association. “School buses are, by far, the safest way for a child to get to and from school every day, and school districts and contractors are doing a fantastic job here in New York. However, we never stop looking for ways to make that ride even safer and to help educate the public about school bus safety issues.”

As part of National School Bus Safety week many New York pupil transportation providers are holding special school bus safety events to raise awareness in their communities, reward drivers and other employees for outstanding safety records, and educate students and parents about the importance of school bus safety.

A few of these events include:

**Suffolk Transportation Service**, Bay Shore, NY – The company, which serves school districts throughout Suffolk County on Long Island, is holding its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Tribute to School Bus Safety. The event brings together school transportation safety experts, school officials, school board members, PTA members and community leaders for an intensive school bus safety educational session. This year’s topics include school bus security, advanced special needs training, and the latest in school bus safety technology.

**Quality Bus Service**, Sparrowbush, NY – The company, serving districts in Orange County, considers parent’s key partners when it comes to school bus safety, so it is doing an educational campaign focused on how parents can help ensure a safer ride for their children. Some of the school bus safety concerns they are talking to parents about include checking their child’s clothing and backpacks to ensure there are no loose items that could be caught on the bus’s door, along with other tips on how to ensure optimal safety at school bus stops, especially during the winter and inclement weather.

**We Transport/Towne Bus/Van Trans**, Plainview, NY - While safety is always the number one priority throughout the year, the company, which provides student transportation services in school districts throughout New York City, Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester Counties, uses National School Bus Safety Week to show appreciation for the people who are on the front lines of student safety, their bus drivers. Throughout the week drivers with exceptional safety records are recognized with special certificates and free breakfasts as a way to thank them for always putting student safety first.

The New York School Bus Contractors Association is also using the occasion to renew its call for the passage of legislation sponsored by New York State Senators John Bonacic (District 42) and Rich Funke (District 55) to increase the penalties on drivers convicted of illegally passing a stopped school bus.

Although drivers ticketed for a first offense face up to 30-days in jail, as much as a \$400 fine, and a 5-point penalty on their drivers' license, it is clear the current penalties do not go far enough to act as a deterrent.

"An estimated 50,000 drivers in New York illegally pass stopped school buses every day school is in session, according to the New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee," said Martucci "Those numbers make it clear that more needs to be done. The New York School Bus Contractors Association strongly supports the passage of two complementary bills, sponsored by State Senator Rich Funke and State Senator John Bonacic, to increase penalties on those drivers who continue to break the law and put our students in danger."

Senator Funke's legislation (S.2978) would increase the range of fines for illegally passing a stopped school bus from a minimum of \$400 to a maximum of \$1500, depending on the number of convictions. The legislation also requires that a person who injures someone while passing a school bus be charged with aggravated vehicular assault, and if a person is killed in the incident, the legislation requires a charge of criminally negligent homicide. Senator Funke's bill has been approved by the New York State Senate in the past, but failed to move in the Assembly.

Senator Bonacic's legislation (S.1634) calls for the additional penalty of a 60-day suspension of a person's drivers' license when that person is convicted of illegally passing a stopped school bus two or more times within a 10-year period. Senator Bonacic's bill has also been approved unanimously by the New York State Senate in the past, but has not moved in the Assembly in recent years.

"Providing a safe ride to and from school for over one-million students in New York is the single most important thing we do as school bus contractors," concluded Martucci. "As champions of school bus safety, making that ride as safe as possible is always our top priority. National School Bus Safety week is another important part of the year-round effort to ensure that New York continues to lead the way in school bus safety."

The National Association for Pupil Transportation's National School Bus Safety Week is a public education program for parents, students, teachers, motorists, school bus operators, school administrators, and others, to join forces and address the importance of school bus safety. Designed to promote school bus safety, school districts throughout the country observe School Bus Safety Week each year during the third week of October.

**About:** The New York School Bus Contractors Association is an organization representing over one hundred school transportation companies, also known as school bus contractors, with the primary mission of promoting safe, reliable and cost-effective student transportation services in New York State. For more information visit: [www.nysbca.com](http://www.nysbca.com)