



# NYAPT

NEW YORK ASSOCIATION FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

266 Hudson Avenue • Albany, NY 12210 • PH: 518-463-4937 FX: 518-463-8743 • WWW.NYAPT.ORG

*Our future is riding with us!*

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO: Honorable Members of the NYS Assembly**  
**FROM: Peter Mannella**  
**REF.: S4434a-Martins // A6821a-Schimel**  
**DATE: June 22, 2011**

I write on behalf of the members of the New York Association for Pupil Transportation to appeal to you to vote in opposition to **A6821a**, which is same as legislation to **S4434a**, that just passed the State Senate this week. It would allow districts to make decisions on transportation services based on so-called “patterns” among student riders and would require districts to use historical data and projections and other studies to arrive at such patterns.

Our opposition to this bill, which is titled the “School Bus Mandate Relief Act” is based in our professional understanding of school transportation laws, logistics and regulations. This bill unnecessarily will put school boards and school transportation administrators in the position of second-guessing their already lean and efficient transportation routing decisions.

The fact is that school districts do not today send out extra school buses; they are too costly for that to happen. Somehow the public debate on school buses has reinforced this notion that excess buses are traveling all over our communities empty or nearly empty and that this is by design and due to inefficiency. Rather, school districts currently make decisions about how many school buses to send out for each run of the day based on their knowledge of the ridership levels for each group of children in their district and even among certain neighborhoods. They should take credit for that instead of being criticized and challenged for their excellent work to keep our children safe.

School transportation is the first place that school leaders turn when there is a need to cut back on expenses. We are asked regularly to find ways to save on fuel and training and parts inventories and routing. This is a regular part of the work of professional school transportation administrators. This legislation will make that work more difficult with no discernible benefits.

We understand that some school administrators are concerned because they believe that the current Education Law requires them to have a seat available for every child in the district regardless of whether they ride the bus or not. This is not the case and recent rulings from the State Education Department and years of experience and best practice bear this out.

It takes smart and prudent stop selection, sound parent relations and ever-evolving routing decisions to avoid having additional buses on the road. School districts that are concerned about this are encouraged to take closer stock of their stop selection and routing models and not seek relief in the form of the provisions that are contained in this bill.

Mandate relief and cost efficiency are the watchwords of this time in our state and our association has offered over a dozen specific cost-savings ideas to help in that discussion. The elements of this bill are NOT among our ideas for cost containment and mandate relief. This bill will not contain any new costs and will not relieve any mandates. If this bill would save money and result in more efficiencies, we would be first in line to support its passage. **And we do not support A6821a and S4434a.**

Similar language appears in **S. 5816** and **S. 5758** which deal with overall mandate relief and we will oppose inclusion of the “patterns” language in those bills as well.