



November 27, 2017

Honorable Vincent Prieto
1 Harmon Plaza, Suite 205
Secaucus, NJ 07094

Dear Speaker Prieto:

We join with New Jersey teachers, school administrators, mayors, the law enforcement community and others concerned about child safety in supporting A-3798/S-211, and respectfully urge you to bring it to the Assembly floor for a final vote before the session concludes.

Now marking its 30th year of protecting kids from preventable injury, Safe Kids has been deeply involved in pedestrian and bike safety for many years through its “Walk This Way” program. It is made possible by FedEx. Recently, we have become engaged in efforts to make school zones safer for children. One of the issues on which we have focused is school bus passing, which puts New Jersey kids in jeopardy.

Every year in the U.S., 13 million drivers pass school buses stopped to pick-up or drop-off children. In 2014, New Jersey police officers ticketed 1,600 drivers for school bus passing. This child safety risk has a face: in the first days of January 2017, a 14-year-old girl was crossing a road near Toms River to get to her school bus which had its drop-arm and flashing red-lights activated. She was hit by a 17-year-old driver and seriously injured.

Throughout the U.S., the law enforcement community has adopted a common sense, budget-neutral remedy with a proven record of success: cameras on the sides of school buses to catch and deter school bus passers. Whether it’s Marietta, Georgia or Carroll County, Maryland, stop arm violations have decreased from 20 to 28 percent since the adoption of stop-arm cameras by local communities. New Jersey is a model on laws and protocols to improve child safety and its communities should have the choice on whether to implement this program to make their kids safer on their way to and from school. A school bus is still the safest way for a child to get to school, and together we can make it even safer.

Mr. Speaker, we urge you to give this legislation a vote so that communities from Cape May to Secaucus can choose to protect their kids on their way to and from school. Please do not hesitate to contact the coordinator of Safe Kids New Jersey, Carol Ann Giardelli, 732-524-3864, cgiardel@its.nj.com. Thank you for your leadership for a safer New Jersey.

Sincerely,

