Farmingville, NY - On April 3, Councilwoman Connie Kepert attended the Operation Safe Stop Day kickoff at the Longwood Middle School where she joined with students and school, law enforcement and elected officials, in reminding drivers not to pass stopped school buses with flashing red lights.

Operation Safe Stop Day is sponsored by the New York Association for Pupil Transportation (NYAPT) and is a day where local law enforcement officers crack down on "hot spots" where school bus drivers say they are frequently passed by motorists. State law requires motorists to come to a full stop when they see a school bus stopped with flashing red lights, which signifies that children are exiting or entering the bus. Studies have shown that about 50,000 motorists illegally pass stopped school buses each day in New York State, sometimes with tragic results. Each year approximately 1,600 tickets are written with fines ranging from $240 to $400 for the first violation, five points on the registered motorist's license, and even imprisonment.

"As a former teacher and a former school bus driver, I am acutely aware of the frequency at which motorists disobey New York State law by passing stopped school buses. More than 2.3 million school children are transported by school buses every day in New York, and the increase in monitoring of illegal passing of buses as well as increasing the education of motorists will help to significantly reduce the risk of injury or harm to our children. I want to thank the Longwood School District for hosting this event every year, as well as the Suffolk County Police Department officers who work every day to improve the safety and welfare of our children."

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