March 18, 2021

Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Majority Leader, New York State Senate
188 State Street Room 907, Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247

**Re: SCHOOL BUS CONTRACTORS – STANDBY COSTS**

**SB2506(B) –PAGE 8, LINES 29-56 AND PAGE 9, LINES 39-44**

Dear Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins:

 I am writing to express my sincere appreciation for including pupil transportation reimbursement for stand-by costs in the Senate’s one-house budget proposal under Part A of SB2506(b) (p. 8, Lines 29-56 & P.9, Lines 39-44). I am now urging you to do everything in your power to ensure that it makes it into the **final budget** that is passed on April 1st, 2021.

It speaks volumes that both the Assembly and Senate rejected the Executive’s Budget proposal that made transportation expenses incurred by districts during the period of time schools were required to go remote – mid-March through the end of June 2020 – not eligible for transportation aid. Thankfully the legislature understands that the matter of honoring 180-day transportation contracts is not simply about wages and benefits, but retaining experienced and highly-trained professional bus drivers, mechanics and matrons, and managing overhead costs in order to have the school bus system up and running in a moment’s notice.

School bus transportation is an extension of the education system and before cuts are made to an industry transporting our most precious cargo—our children-- we must consider the downfalls and unintended consequences of that decision.

Thank you for your continued support on this urgent issue.

Respectfully,

Senator \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_