

Town of New Canaan

POLICE DEPARTMENT

174 SOUTH AVENUE

NEW CANAAN, CONNECTICUT 06840

TELEPHONE (203) 594-3500

FAX (203) 594-3553



CHIEF OF POLICE
EDWARD J. NADRICZNY

March 2, 2010

Joint Committee on Judiciary
Room 2500, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

RE: Amending Connecticut General Statutes § 14-279-Vehicles to Stop for School Bus

Due to an increase in traffic during the past holiday season and concerns expressed by members of the New Canaan Community, the New Canaan Police Department in a collaborative effort with the New Canaan Board of Education, Norwalk Supervisory State's Attorney Suzanne Vieux, the New Canaan School District Transportation Coordinator, Roy Walder, and New Canaan school bus drivers implemented *Operation Safe School Bus Stop*. As part of this initiative, officers intensified their efforts to target motorists who pass stopped school buses.

The increased enforcement included assigning officers to ride on school buses to spot violations, assigning officers in unmarked vehicles to follow school buses, and working closely with Norwalk Supervisory State's Attorney Suzanne Vieux, the New Canaan School District Transportation Coordinator, Roy Walder, and New Canaan school bus drivers to identify and prosecute motorists caught passing stopped school buses. Video cameras are installed on all New Canaan school buses that capture images of motorists who pass stopped school buses and very often violations are reported to the New Canaan Police Department.



As a direct result of the aforementioned enforcement efforts and investigation of violations captured on video, the New Canaan Police Department identified revisions to Connecticut General Statutes §14-279 that will ensure that those motorists charged with passing a stopped school bus will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

The New Canaan Police Department would like the legislature to amend Connecticut General Statutes §14-279 so that the statute has enhanced penalties. We firmly believe that passing a stopped school bus endangers our children. We view this violation as a substantial risk and as such we recommend the following enhancements:

- 1. Make the violation a misdemeanor and set a mandatory minimum fine of \$500.00. (This will require a court appearance and create more of a deterrent.)**
- 2. Create a mandatory 48 hour license suspension (license is taken at the scene by the officer as is done for 14-227A-DWI) for second or subsequent violations.**
- 3. Mandate that the operator's vehicle be impounded for 48 hours for second or subsequent violations.**
- 4. State in the statute that in lieu of C.G.S §14-279 (c) (the requirement that a school bus driver provide a statement) video of a violation is prima facie evidence of the violation.**

5. **Create enhanced penalties for a violation committed in a school zone.**
6. **State in the statute that the registered owner or lessee of the vehicle is deemed the operator if the operator is not produced or identified by the registered owner or lessee.**
7. **Make driver retraining mandatory for second or subsequent violations**

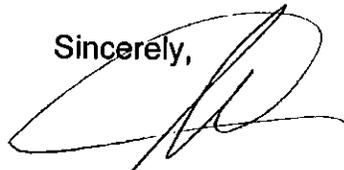
We are certain that enhancing the statute as aforementioned will help raise awareness, reduce violations, allow those charged with this offense to be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law; and, ultimately increase the safety of Connecticut's school children.

Sincerely,



Chief Edward Nadriczny

Sincerely,



Captain Leon Krolikowski

CC: Honorable John Heatherington
New Canaan Police Commission
The New Canaan Board of Education
Town of New Canaan Transportation Coordinator, Roy Walder