

June 26, 2025

Honorable Senator Sarlo
Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee
State House Annex
P.O. Box 068
Trenton, NJ 08625-0068

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 3858 Submitted by the New Jersey Regional Family Support Planning Councils (RFSPC) June 2025

Dear Honorable Senator Sarlo and Members of the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee:

The New Jersey Regional Family Support Planning Councils (RFSPC), created under the Family Support Act of 1993, are proud to represent families of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) across our state.

We submit this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 3858, which addresses persistent and urgent concerns about school transportation safety for students with disabilities.

In response to the heartbreaking and preventable death of a six-year-old student in Somerset County in 2023, the RFSPC issued an [open letter](#) to Governor Murphy and other state leaders. In that letter, we called for robust training standards for all transportation personnel and the installation of onboard camera systems, two pillars that are now addressed directly in S3858.

Our position is grounded in firsthand stories shared by families across New Jersey. Between August 2023 and May 2024, the RFSPC, in collaboration with the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities, the New Jersey Department of Education, and SPAN Parent Advocacy Network, conducted four statewide listening sessions and an online survey to gather testimony and feedback on school transportation safety. The [survey](#) gathered testimonies from 88 respondents, over 96% of whom expressed concern about transportation safety. Alarmingly, over 80% reported that their child had experienced at least one incident that compromised their safety. Specific concerns ranged from distracted or untrained staff to equipment failures, unsafe driving, lack of communication among families, schools and transport providers, and children being left unattended.

Senate Bill 3858 proposes solutions that families have been calling for:

- Required training on student behavior, emergency procedures, and equipment use.
- Mandatory 911 calls and reporting for life-threatening emergencies.
- Installation of video cameras, GPS systems, and two-way communication devices on school buses serving students with disabilities.
- Regular inspections to ensure this safety equipment is present and functioning.

RFSPC urges the swift passage of this legislation to take a crucial step in preventing further tragedies and placing concrete accountability and proactive safety measures.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important bill. If you have questions or would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact us at newjerseyfspc@gmail.com, or Kyoko Coco, our Statewide coordinator, Kyoko.Coco@njcdd.org, 609-341-3112.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Dotty Blakeslee, Chairperson
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/s/

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