

EDITORIALS

School bus cams could save lives

The penalty for passing a stopped school bus — a fine of \$250 to \$400, five points on your driver's license and a possible 30 days in jail — is steep, and it should be. But citations for the crime are rare, even though bus drivers say motorists commonly blow by them as children get on or off and stop signs and hazard lights are activated.

The New York Association for Pupil Transportation, which represents school bus managers, estimates 50,000 motor vehicles illegally pass school buses in the state each day, but Suffolk County police issued only 118 tickets for the act last year. Police say it's difficult to catch violators because cops have to see the risky behavior to write a ticket while their visible presence often prevents such dangerous driving.

But now a local school district is poised to test a program to catch such violators with cameras rather than cops, and the State Legislature soon could allow tickets to be issued via such programs.

East Meadow school officials are preparing to install cameras on the stop-sign arms of a dozen of its 60 school buses for 30 days to identify motorists who drive around stopped buses. During the pilot program, Albany lawmakers are considering a change. The Assembly recently passed legislation to allow information from those cameras to be passed on to local police, who could issue \$250 tickets to the car owners if the evidence is clear. The Senate should take action as well.

Passing stopped school buses is truly dangerous, as the serious injuries suffered by a 10-year-old boy hit by a driver in Kings Park in 2017 showed. And passing stopped school buses is part of a broader, ferociously aggressive driving pattern that needs to stop.

School bus cameras already are used to issue tickets in at least 16 states, and they're well worth trying here. — *The editorial board*

Belmont stop on Main Line is worth a careful look

It seems state officials are listening and ready to address the largest remaining concern about Belmont Park's redevelopment.

An agreement to study a new full-time Long Island Rail Road station at Belmont Park is a key step toward providing much-needed regularly scheduled service at the site of a proposed hockey arena, hotel and retail village. The station could serve workers, shoppers, concertgoers and hockey fans, while alleviating traffic and providing a new commuting hub for area residents. By putting the station on the LIRR's Main Line, likely near Belmont Park's north parking lot, state officials would provide travelers from Nassau and Suffolk with a direct route to Belmont and avoid the expense and complexity of transforming the existing but little used spur alongside the track. As a bonus, the plan could give horse-racing fans another option on the day of the Belmont Stakes.

But there's still a lot we don't know. State officials are working with the developers, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the New York Racing Association to address details, including the station's exact location, the sharing of Belmont's north parking lot, and shuttle-bus options to the proposed arena and shopping village.

Then there's the issue of paying for it. The financially stressed MTA can't be expected to foot the whole bill. So, the players behind this project, including Sterling Project Development and the New York Islanders, would have to pay for a lot of it directly, or try other financing methods, such as one that uses the developer's future revenues and property value increases to pay for public projects.

It's all doable if the state, MTA and the developers devise a transit plan that has something for everyone, and it could turn Belmont Park into a true jewel in Long Island's crown. — *The editorial board*

MATT DAVIES



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LETTERS

Perspectives on Biden-style affection

I am no psychologist, but I play one at the coffee shop. This issue of Joe Biden and his unwelcomed gestures has to be looked at in a generational and cultural light ["Biden: 'I'll be 'more mindful,'" News, April 4].

None of the women have claimed he was a predator or that he sexually harassed them. It is that he violated their personal space and made them feel uncomfortable.

I believe this is an outgrowth of the #MeToo movement in which many gestures are under scrutiny. I would ask about the women making the complaints: What was your upbringing like? Did your father pick you up and toss you in the air and tell you he loved you? Did you find comfort in being hugged by friends?

These questions are not to accuse anyone, but to understand why the women felt uncomfortable about Biden's actions. He is from another time and generation, and I know, because I am from the same generation.

*Anthony Bruno,
Babylon*

I just finished watching an episode of the miniseries "Jesus" on the History Channel. Jesus cured many people with the laying on of hands. I couldn't help thinking that if he did that today, he would probably be accused of inappropriate touching or making someone "uncomfortable."

*Elaine Harrison,
Eastport*

Grateful for reforms on criminal justice

New York just took a major step toward creating a more fair and equitable

justice system by reforming our pretrial laws ["A remarkable three months in Albany," Editorial, April 2].

I applaud the State Senate and Assembly for addressing the crisis of mass incarceration and moving New York State forward. The old bail and discovery laws discriminated against low-income people and people of color. They allowed prosecutors and district attorneys to rack up easy convictions through predatory plea deals, and caused countless people to lose jobs and apartments because they couldn't afford bail.

Our elected leaders have set New York on the right track. They resisted the "dangerousness" measures being pushed by self-serving district attorneys, which would have further embedded racial biases in the legal system. I hope we can