

# The Connecticut General Assembly



For IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 8, 2018

Contact: Tess Koenigsmark  
860-240-8790

## House Passes Rep. Linehan's Student Safety Bill *Bill prompted by arrest of local school bus driver moves to Senate*

State **Rep. Liz Linehan** (D-Cheshire/Southington/Wallingford) lauded the House passage Monday of her proposal to ensure school districts are notified when school system staff employed by third party contractors are under investigation for crimes involving children.

[HB 5334](#) would extend protocols currently applied to teachers being investigated by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) for child abuse or neglect to school employees who do not work directly for the town but through a contract with the school board – such as bus drivers and substitute teachers.

Under the bill, if an investigation into child abuse or neglect is opened against someone who is a school contractor, DCF will now notify the superintendent, who may contact the worker's employer directly with any concerns. Additionally, when DCF closes an investigation, the bill instructs the department to follow up with the superintendent.

"This issue was brought to my attention by a parent who was gravely concerned that his child's former school bus driver had been arrested for sexual abuse of a child and neither he nor the school had been made aware. I think any parent – myself included – would be similarly outraged and terrified to learn of a situation like this," **Rep. Linehan** said. "This bill will help ensure that school districts are promptly notified when staff employed by contractors are being investigated for crimes involving children. Many Cheshire, Southington and Wallingford residents testified in favor of this bill to keep our kids safe."

Rep. Linehan proposed the legislation after a constituent alerted her to the [arrest of a Southington school bus driver](#) accused of sexually assaulting a girl for eight years. The school bus company fired the driver following his arrest, but never notified Southington's board of education, raising concerns that the school district was denied the opportunity to investigate if the man had abused children through his position as a bus driver.

The bill passed with strong bipartisan support and now awaits action in the Senate.

###