

February 2, 2013

Senator Andrew Maynard
Representative Antonio Guerrero
Co-Chairs, Senate Transportation Committee
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: HB 6058: AN ACT STUDYING AND IMPROVING PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Honorable Senator Maynard, Honorable Representative Guerrero, members of the Transportation Committee, fellow Representatives and Senators of the CT General Assembly:

My name is Mark Stopa and I am the City of New Haven Alderman for Ward 12. I am writing this letter on behalf of myself and my colleagues, Alderpersons Brenda Jones-Barnes (Ward 13), Barbara Constantinople (Ward 11), and Alphonse Paolillo Jr. (Ward 17). We are writing to urge your support in passing this bill to conduct a study, and make the necessary improvements, for pedestrian safety, along Route 80 in New Haven, CT.

Route 80 is a state road that runs through Wards 11 and 12 and provides access to Ward 13 in New Haven. Vehicles exiting from Exit 8 on Interstate 91 (I-91) enter Route 80 in New Haven. Due to the configuration of the exit, vehicles enter Route 80 at high speeds in excess of posted limits. This creates very serious dangers for vehicles and pedestrians trying to navigate Route 80. Compounding this problem is the lack of sidewalks and bike lanes to allow for safe pedestrian movements to the stores, restaurants and businesses along Route 80 in New Haven.

Based on a recent study authorized by the South Central Regional Council of Governments ("SCROG") concerning Route 80, the 85th percentile speeds of vehicles in this area were in the range of 40-48 mph. This is much higher than the posted speed limit of 35 mph. Furthermore, along Route 80 between I-91 and Thompson Street in East Haven, the study indicated that there were 420 accidents between January 2007 and December 2009. The study further indicated that these accidents, many of which were rear-end collisions and sideswipe collisions, were caused by vehicles following too closely, failure to grant right of way and traffic control violations. Improvements along Route 80 are essential to reduce speeds, thereby reducing the number of accidents and allowing for safe pedestrian movement along this main corridor.

Please support this bill and approve the funds required to perform this study and to construct the improvements proposed. Give New Haven and Connecticut the ability to increase the safety of its citizens and the livability and "walkability" of our streets. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify before you today and for all the time and effort you spend as a legislator, helping to make Connecticut a better place to live.

Mark Stopa
Ward 12 Alderman
Quinnipiac Meadows

Brenda Jones-Barnes
Ward 13 Alderwoman
Fair Haven Heights

Barbara Constantinople
Ward 11 Alderwoman
Bella Vista

Alphonse Paolillo Jr.
Ward 17 Alderman
East Shore