

March 1, 2014

Sen. Andrew Maynard and Rep. Antonio Guerrero, Co-Chairs
Connecticut General Assembly Transportation Committee
Room 2300
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: SB 336

Dear Senator Maynard and Representative Guerrero

As a Pediatric Emergency Medicine physician, I write to you to express our my support for Senate Bill 336, "An Act Concerning the Penalty for Causing Harm to a Vulnerable User of a Public Way". SB 336 is an important step to raise awareness of vulnerable road users and hold drivers accountable for crashes that involve the serious injury or death of a vulnerable road user. Roadway accidents are responsible for the majority of serious injury and death among the pediatric population that I serve, who are the very definition of a vulnerable user of the roadway.

The proposed legislation would:

- Define a "vulnerable user" of the state's roads as a pedestrian, highway worker, person riding or driving an animal, person riding a bicycle, person using a skateboard, roller skates or inline skates, person operating or riding on an agricultural tractor or person using a wheelchair or motorized chair; and
- Provide that a person who fails to exercise reasonable care while driving, and injures or kills a vulnerable user, shall be fined up to \$1,000.

I would also support provisions, which were included past proposed bills, to require a person committing an infraction under SB 336 to attend driver retraining and perform community service. Vulnerable user laws in states such as Oregon, Washington, and Delaware include these requirements to ensure that drivers are held accountable and operate their vehicles safely in the future. I hope you will support strengthening SB 336 by working to add these provisions.

SB 191 reflects the spirit of the state's 2009 Complete Streets legislation: That our roadways should be safe for everyone who uses them, even the most vulnerable. Thank you for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

Kirsten Bechtel MD
Section of Pediatric Emergency Medicine
Department of Pediatrics-Yale School of Medicine