

To the Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee:

While I agree with the following points provided by Bike, Walk Connecticut I'd like to start out with my own experiences.

I am the champion of the 2012 National Bike Challenge. I did this the year before I had to move to CT. I **COULD NOT HAVE DONE THIS IN CONNECTICUT**. First, drivers in Connecticut do not follow roadway regulations. From experience it seems that they are **NOT** afraid of the regulations **BEING ENFORCED**. Almost nobody here **ATTEMPTS** to stop at a yellow light, and several cars still try to get through **RED** lights before the other traffic gets into the intersection. Speed regulations are often treated as suggestions. Regulations will never be followed when not enforced.

When I got my first bicycle in Connecticut, I was struck by a school bus within 24 hours. The bus had already had to stop for the 3 vehicles in front of me (going straight through the intersection), and the bus driver was trying to make a left hand turn. As the 2nd vehicle cleared the intersection the bus began moving into the intersection and accelerated as soon as the 3rd passed. The bus was already on a collision course with me and once I realized he just wasn't seeing me all I could hope to do was pedal faster so I wouldn't end up under the bus. I got just far enough that the buses front driver's side tire only impacted the rear wheel of my bicycle. I was knocked of the bicycle, and the damage to the bicycle was more than the cost (less than 24 hours old mind you), but I had managed to avoid serious injury to myself. Most people would not have had the speed and experience to have survived that situation. The bus driver slowed to a stop and watched me pull my bicycle to the curb, but then just took off. When brought back to the scene by the West Haven Police Department the driver first claimed that he had a green arrow (which was proven false), and then denied hitting me (claiming he thought I had just fallen off the bicycle). **HE WAS NOT CITED FOR ANY TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS**. Despite the tread marks from the buses tires being on my bicycle, First Student's insurance refuses to pay damages because there was no paint from my bicycle on their bus.

With 1 years Department of Transportation financing spent on bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure (Overall much less than our 'share' of the transportation being done), we could provide a safe route for people who choose to get to there destination by bicycle or walking. It's not right to give all of the funding to people who choose to get to there destination by motor-vehicle. In the 123 day period of the National Bike Challenge, I rode 16,532 miles. That is more than many people drive in an entire year, I just want to be safe while I do that.

As a ride coordinator for Ride2Recovery(.com), I help injured veterans recover through cycling. One of the primary reasons our organization is so successful is other veterans trust me because they know as a fellow veteran because I commit to it I **WILL NOT LEAVE THEM BEHIND**. That is a sacred trust between us. Cycling is an effective recovery tool because 1st it challenges the veteran to be involved in the community, and secondly it is a **SAFE** low impact sport. Cycling causes less wear to the joints than

WALKING. For example Gary N. (62) hadn't ridden a bicycle in 42 years and had began to use a walker. He was suffering from pinched spinal nerves at the neck, and had recently damaged his hip when a chair broke out from under him. Within 5 weeks he was able to not only go without the walker, he now only occasionally uses a cane. Gary didn't become a recluse because he let me force him to stay active. I need SAFE places for my veterans to recover. Once I can give the veterans the CONFIDENCE that they will be SAFE, then they are willing to give me the RESPONSIBILITY to pursue their RECOVERY.

As a member of Bike Walk Connecticut, I support the Governor's proposals to develop and fund a first-rate active transportation network of bike lanes, greenways, multiuse paths, and pedestrian infrastructure in Connecticut. Please support HB 6840.

- Biking and walking are cost-effective ways to reduce traffic congestion, and they're good for the environment, our health, and our economy.
- Bike lanes, sidewalks and greenways cost a fraction of what it costs to build and maintain roads. People want to bike and walk more, but many don't feel safe without bike lanes, greenways and sidewalks. Build them and people will use them.
- Since transportation is the biggest contributor to greenhouse gases in Connecticut, consider that biking and walking couldn't be greener ways to get around. Active transportation must be a key piece of our climate action plan.
- Connecticut's car-dependent lifestyle is not the lifestyle that millennials or the creative class have in mind. A well-designed active transportation network will help bring millennials and the creative class to Connecticut and keep them here, strengthening our economy. Additionally, walkable, bikeable places would boost tourism immeasurably, with benefits spreading throughout our economy.

For so many reasons, it's time for Connecticut to become a great place to bike and walk. Please support HB 6840.

Thank you.
Michael Lemuel