

February 27, 2020

RE: HB 5324

Dear Members of the Transportation Committee,

We are pediatric ER doctors. Collectively, we have taken care of hundreds of children each year who are injured either as pedestrians or as cyclists in motor vehicle crashes. We urge you to pass HB 5324, *AN ACT CONCERNING PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AT CROSSWALKS, SPEED LIMITS IN MUNICIPALITIES, FINES AND CHARGES FOR CERTAIN VIOLATIONS AND THE GREENWAYS COMMEMORATIVE ACCOUNT*. This common-sense legislation would give cities, which have a dense population of vulnerable users such as pedestrians and cyclists, the tools needed to make the streets safer.

There are two life-saving aspects of this bill. The first is: *To (1) require motorists to grant the right-of-way to pedestrians who affirmatively indicate their intention to cross the road in a crosswalk*. Motorists must stop for pedestrians crossing the street; this is common sense. Every state has legislation that provides pedestrians with the right of way to cross the road in a crosswalk. The biggest problem for pedestrians, the most vulnerable user of our streets, is how to make approaching traffic stop without entering the "killing zone" in front of traffic before crossing. Crossing the road becomes problematic when in-road pedestrian signs reminding cars to stop are removed for snow removal, which is six months of every year in Connecticut. When pedestrians and drivers are confused about when a driver is required to stop for a pedestrian in a crosswalk, drivers are encouraged to refuse to stop, and pedestrians are more reluctant to exercise their legal rights of way to cross the street.

The second is: *to (2) allow local traffic authorities to establish lower speed limits on streets under their jurisdiction by holding a public hearing regarding such speed limits and providing notification of such speed limits to the Office of the State Traffic Administration*.

HB 5324 permits cities the flexibility to lower speed limits in neighborhoods densely populated with pedestrians and cyclists. Studies have shown that the average risk of fatality for a pedestrian struck by a vehicle reaches 5% at an impact speed of 20 mph, 45% at 30 mph, and 85% at 40 MPH. (<http://humantransport.org/sidewalks/SpeedKills.htm>).

There were over 7000 car crashes in New Haven in 2019; while a minority of these crashes involved vulnerable users, they bear the biggest brunt of these crashes in terms of injury, death, productivity losses due to inability to work. For example, the intersection of York Street and South Frontage Road, in the middle of Yale's Medical Campus and the site of pedestrian fatalities, has nearly 600 people crossing that busy intersection every hour during peak commuting times on weekday mornings. People want to be able to get out of their cars to walk and bike to work on the medical campus. They want to do it safely, where cars are not traveling through the intersection of York Street and South Frontage Road at 50 MPH, the speed at which a pedestrian or cyclist would likely die if struck by a motor vehicle.

This bill will not cost the state any money. It merely protects vulnerable users in the crosswalk and cyclists on the road from being struck by vehicles traveling at speeds that would cause considerable harm in a crash with a vulnerable user.

Thank you for considering this simple, life-saving proposal.

Sincerely,

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