

## Testimony in Support of HB 5429

February 16, 2021

Dear Chair Lemar, Ranking Member Somers, Ranking Member Carney, Vice Chair Cassano, Vice Chair Simms, and Members of the Transportation Committee. I strongly support Connecticut HB 5429, An Act Concerning Pedestrian Safety, Vision Zero Council, Speed Limits In Municipalities, Fines And Charges For Certain Violations, The Greenways Commemorative Account And Maintenance Work Zone And School Zone Safety Enforcement.

Bill HB 5429 will help quell the pervasive lawlessness on our roadways that kills and maims our people, our pets and wildlife. Speed, distracted driving [texting, watching videos] and intoxicated driving [either alcohol or drugs] are taking a toll. Our roads, whether they be Interstate, State or town roads, are not safe. There are not enough police to patrol and punish the unrestrained lawless driving patterns that have become normal.

As a bicycle commuter I biked from Bloomfield near Cigna to UConn Health travelling Mountain Road through West Hartford to Farmington. Every day I would have a 'close call' even though I was dressed in yellow neon with flashing lights forward and rear. I was either not seen or drivers flat out resented that I was travelling the road on a bike. For my own safety I abandoned cycling to work.

As a commuter travelling I-91 and I-84 from Suffield to Farmington, every day was a white knuckle day. Traffic surpassed posted speeds moving 70, 80, 90 or more miles per hour till snarled due to a daily accident. Driving the speed limit guaranteed an angry driver on my bumper. Every day felt like a lottery – would this be the day I'd be involved in a high speed smash up. My manager has totaled three cars in three years commuting to work – all due to a distracted driver in the car behind.

COVID-19 has me working from home for the past year. Now I am a pedestrian more than a commuter. My street has a 25MPH speed limit, there is a three way stop next house over. Rarely do drivers follow the speed limit nor stop at the stop signs. My cat was killed by a speeding pickup truck. I witnessed a speeding Amazon delivery truck nearly running over wild turkeys. A few days later I found tail feathers that had been caught under a car tire, a few days after that, a painted turtle smooshed on the road. When I walk the quaint picturesque road along the CT River, cars fly by 40, 50, 60MPH or more. Suffield Police established a speed trailer for two weeks, the top speed recorded was 88MPH!

The RT190 Suffield/Enfield Bridge is undergoing maintenance, the speed limit in the construction zone is lowered from 45MPH to 35MPH. Drivers tailgate my vehicle, try to pass and have no regard for the workmen a few feet from our cars putting their lives at risk.

It is impossible to have sufficient police presence in all areas I describe allowing drivers to ignore laws and not be held accountable. This legislation is a good start on providing safer roads. H.B. 5429 would allow cameras to be placed in work and school zones, capture license plates of speeding vehicles with registered owners receiving a ticket. Leveraging technology to enforce speed limits, issue fines, will encourage drivers to slow down and discourage reckless driving. Please support HB 5429.

Respectfully,

Carol Underwood,

Suffield, CT