



The Honorable Andrew Maynard
The Honorable Antonio Guerrero
Co-Chairpersons, Transportation Committee
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Re: SUPPORT for SB 191, the Vulnerable User bill
SUPPORT for HB 5126, funding for bike lanes and sidewalks in West Haven
OPPOSITION to SB 103 and HB 5246, single file riding

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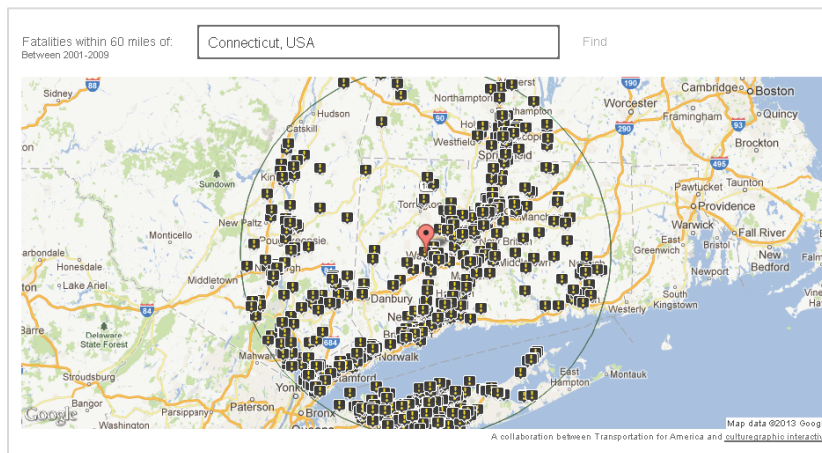
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kelly Kennedy

Dear Chairmen Maynard and Guerrero:

Bike Walk Connecticut would like to offer its positions on several bills before the Transportation Committee on February 13, 2013.

Bike Walk Connecticut SUPPORTS SB 191, An Act Concerning The Penalty For Causing Harm To A Vulnerable User Of A Public Way. This bill will help hold accountable careless drivers who injure or kill non-motorized users of the road. It passed the State Senate unanimously last year but failed to come to a vote in the House. In its *Dangerous by Design* report, Transportation for America notes that nationwide, pedestrians account for nearly 12 percent of total traffic deaths. Between 2000 and 2009 **373** people were killed while walking in Connecticut. Hartford County leads Connecticut with the most pedestrian fatalities between 2000 and 2009. Transportation for America reports that a majority of these deaths occurred along “arterial” roadways, streets engineered for speeding traffic with little or no provision for people on foot, in wheelchairs or on bicycles. The map below depicts pedestrian deaths in Connecticut from 2000-2009.



Not only are many of our roadways dangerous to vulnerable pedestrians and cyclists—particularly when speed limits are not observed or enforced -- the attitudes such as those expressed in comments to a recent Simsbury *Patch* storyⁱⁱ raise serious concerns:

“If I see 2 bicyclist riding side by side I make it a point to get as close as possible to them...”

Vulnerable User legislation is good public policy, and we urge you to vote in favor of it.

Bike Walk Connecticut

Bike Walk Connecticut also supports HB 5126, An Act Authorizing Bonds of the State to the City of West Haven for Sidewalks and Bicycle Lanes. This bill would provide funding to install sidewalks and bicycle lanes for the 1.5 miles between the Metro-North West Haven train station and the Yale West Campus. This measure too is good public policy, as it would provide an active transportation route from the train station to Yale, Connecticut's only Bicycle Friendly University.

Finally, **Bike Walk Connecticut does not support SB 103 or HB 5246, two bills requiring cyclists to ride single file.**

We appreciate the safety sentiment behind the proposed bill. However, subsection (b) of Conn. Gen. Stat. §14-286b already provides that "Persons riding two abreast ... shall not impede the normal and reasonable movement of traffic ..."

As we understand the law, it *is* illegal for bicyclists to ride two abreast if that action alone prevents a motorist from safely passing. But we must point out that many of Connecticut's roads are too narrow to allow a motorist to safely pass even a single bike-rider in the face of oncoming traffic.

We are grateful to our state government for the actions it has taken in recent years to improve opportunities for "active transportation." But we all have to learn to adjust to the changes. Motorists must accept that they don't own the roads; and bicyclists must learn to follow the rules of the road.

Accordingly, rather than amend current law, Bike Walk Connecticut urges that Connecticut re-commit to, and enforce, a vigorous **Share the Road campaign** to promote the legal, safe and courteous use of the roads by all users.

Attached please find some additional comments on these bills from some of our members.

Thank you for considering these viewpoints.

Sincerely,



Kelly Kennedy, Executive Director
Bike Walk Connecticut

ⁱ Transportation for America, *Dangerous by Design*, <http://t4america.org/resources/dangerousbydesign2011/>

ⁱⁱ Simsbury Patch, *Debate Heats Up Over Proposed Single File Riding Bill* (Jan. 16, 2013), at <http://simsbury.patch.com/articles/debate-heats-up-over-proposed-single-file-riding-bill>



Maryellen Thibodeau: 15 Wyndwood Rd. West Hartford, CT 06107

Comments on Vulnerable User Bill (SB 191)

As someone who both walks and bikes regularly for transportation and recreation, I too often see drivers talking on their handheld phone, scrolling through their email or texting. As a pedestrian and a cyclist, I feel very vulnerable in the face of this danger and fully support the increased penalties prescribed by SB 191 for people who put people like me at risk of serious injury. Thank you.

Comments on Single File Rider Bills (SB 103, HB 5246)

I feel strongly that the current law should not be amended. The language in place adequately provides for safe conditions on the roadway, which must be shared by motor vehicles and others, such as cyclists. Any problems can be addressed by enforcing the current law and through education of all road users.

Charles Beristain: 15 Sulgrave Road, West Hartford, CT 06107

Comments on HB 5126, Bike Lanes & Sidewalks from Train Station to Yale West Campus

We need facilities that get us from rapid transit to our final destination without using cars .. this is a worthwhile project and should be approved.

Tom O'Brien: 134 Wellsville Ave. New Milford, CT 06776

Comments on Vulnerable User Bill (SB 191)

I am writing to register my support for passage of S.B. No. 191, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PENALTY FOR CAUSING HARM TO A VULNERABLE USER OF A PUBLIC WAY.

If I had a nickel for every time someone told me that I was "taking my life into my hands" by riding a bike on the roads in Connecticut, I wouldn't be rich, but I'd have heavy pockets.

None of the motorists who pass too close, or turn directly in front of me, or "pull a right hook," are homicidal maniacs. They are my friends and neighbors. But something happens to all of us when we get behind the wheel and isolate ourselves inside a three-ton bubble of glass and steel. It becomes all about "me," getting where I need to go as fast as possible. Time seems to speed up. And a 5 second wait to allow oncoming traffic to clear in order to safely pass a bicyclist or pedestrian feels like an hour.

We ignore the humanity of our fellow travelers who have nothing to protect them from injury or death, except possibly a styrofoam helmet; until something terrible happens. And it happens all too frequently in our state.

The Vulnerable User's Bill is a tool to remind otherwise good citizens of our duty to look out for one another, and to punish those who carelessly put others at risk.

I urge you to pass it.



Comments on Single File Rider Bills (SB 103, HB 5246)

I am writing to register my opposition to S.B. No. 103, AN ACT REQUIRING BICYCLISTS TO RIDE SINGLE FILE ON A PUBLIC ROAD.

As a bike-rider, and a motorist, I've been heartened by the efforts that the State of Connecticut has made in recent years to reform it's auto-centric transportation system and offer more support for walking and bicycling. The increasing numbers of people I see on sidewalks and bikes offers proof that the policy is working.

Of course, not everybody embraces these positive changes. Some drivers who were accustomed to having the roads to themselves, simply don't want to share. Hence their outrage when they observe cyclists rolling through a stop sign, or riding two abreast, in places where they ought to ride single file--as if they were the only road users to ever flout the law.

Passing a new law though is not the answer. If I understand it correctly, under subsection (b) of Conn. Gen. Stat. §14-286b ("Persons riding two abreast ... shall not impede the normal and reasonable movement of traffic ...") it's already against the law for bicyclists to ride two abreast if that action alone prevents a motorist from safely passing.

Education, rather than legislation, is what we all need. Motorists must accept that they don't own the roads; and bicyclists must learn to follow the rules of the road. A public relations campaign aimed at helping both groups learn to share the road would be much more effective than restricting the movements of bicyclists.

Thank you.

W Neal Fisher: 4 Chaplin Street. Newington, CT 06111

Comments on Single File Rider Bills (SB 103, HB 5246)

Long ago, pedestrians and cyclists used to be safe on our roadways. America's fascination with the automobile created a automobile culture that relegated vulnerable users to problems and impediments to motorized traffic. Slowly, America is learning that they have to share the road and protect these vulnerable users from those that feel they are "entitled" to the road.

For many, many years the State of CT has spent billions on roadway improvements that have ignored the safety of vulnerable users. If one tenth of one percent of these funds had been dedicated to vulnerable users, we would not be faced with this issue now. But we didn't and I am forced to ride my bicycle dodging storm drains, glass, sand, rocks, trash, and car debris. Unfortunately, many vehicle operators have no idea how many obstacles a cyclist has to deal with. And many of those operators think the road is for their exclusive use. Please don't make it harder for a cyclist to make use of Connecticut's roads.

Anthony Cherolis: 37 Alden Street, Unit H. Hartford, CT 06114

Comments on Vulnerable User Bill (SB 191)

Vulnerable User laws are reasonable and will encourage a more walkable and bikable state. That benefits everyone, including motorists.

Comments on Single File Rider Bills (SB 103, HB 5246)

Both of these bills are ridiculous. The current statute is adequate.

Comments on HB 5126, Bike Lanes & Sidewalks from Train Station to Yale West Campus
Sounds like a great idea.



Dareck Stringfield: 33 Belmont Street. Hamden, CT 06517

Comments on Vulnerable User Bill (SB 191)

I support Bike Walk Connecticut's choice to support SB 191. SB 191 would ensure a minimum amount of respect and care for those lives on the road who are not in a vehicle.

Holly Schulz: 543 Hoyt Street. Darien, CT 06820

Comments on Vulnerable User Bill (SB 191)

This is an important first step for pedestrian safety. However, we still need to have better laws requiring our state to build bike lanes and sidewalks on state roads to help keep pedestrians and cyclists out of harms way. This is especially necessary near public transit, and is sorely lacking currently. See Rt.106 at Talmadge Hill Train Station where no sidewalk exists, despite requests to the state since 2007 to address this issue.

Comments on HB 5126, Bike Lanes & Sidewalks from Train Station to Yale West Campus

This is a great project to support...pedestrian safety near public transit. However, we still need to have better laws requiring our state to build bike lanes and sidewalks on ALL state roads to help keep pedestrians and cyclists out of harms way. This

Robert O'Connor: 126 Krawski Drive. South Windsor, CT 06074

Comments on Vulnerable User Bill (SB 191)

I support and hope that you will also support SB191, which would provide that any person operating a motor vehicle on a public way, including any public highway, road, street, avenue, alley, driveway, parkway or place, under the control of the state or any political subdivision of the state, dedicated, appropriated or opened to public travel or other use, who fails to exercise reasonable care and causes the serious physical injury or death of a vulnerable user of a public way, including any 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, provided such vulnerable user has shown reasonable care in such user's use of the public way, shall be required to attend a motor vehicle operator's retraining program and to perform community service and may be fined not more than one thousand dollars

Comments on Single File Rider Bills (SB 103, HB 5246)

I oppose SB 103 and HB 5246. The current laws already sufficiently address this issue. There is no need to further restrict bicycle riders and take away their options for safety and security.

Comments on HB 5126, Bike Lanes & Sidewalks from Train Station to Yale West Campus

I support the funding toward making New Haven and the Yale campus more safe for bicyclist and pedestrians.