



June 14, 2018

The Honorable Joseph A. Boncore
Chair, Joint Committee on Transportation
State House Room 112
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable William Straus
Chair, Joint Committee on Transportation
State House Room 134
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairs Boncore and Straus:

Thank you for your leadership in introducing SB2362/HB4421, bills that would implement new safety policies to reduce child traffic fatalities with restrictions on how a motorist navigates around vulnerable users. We especially endorse the creation of an essential safety zone for vulnerable users of a required passing distance of motorists. It would also mandate motorists to yield to cyclists crossing the road in a crosswalk or bicycle lane.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 20 percent of children killed in traffic crashes in the U.S. are pedestrians.¹ There has recently been a spike in the number of pedestrian traffic fatalities in all age groups, including teens. Between 2013 and 2016, there was a 32 percent increase in pedestrian fatalities of children aged 12-19.² In November 2017, a crash occurred in Westwood, Massachusetts, where six-year old Eddie Thompson was struck and killed while riding a bicycle in a crosswalk with his father and sister.³ Clearly, the driver was intruding a safety zone in a crosswalk.

[Safe Kids Worldwide](#) is a nonprofit organization working to prevent childhood injury, the number one cause of death for children in the U.S. We were founded by a pediatric surgeon at Children's National Health System which continues to lead Safe Kids. Throughout the world, almost one million children die of an injury each year, and almost every one of these tragedies is preventable. Safe Kids works with an extensive network of more than 400 coalitions in the United States, including Safe Kids Massachusetts, based at Boston Children's Hospital. Like Safe Kids Massachusetts, more than 100 of our coalitions are based at pediatric and medical institutions, and also at firehouses, police stations and health departments. As a trusted, go-to resource for parents, we educate on how to prevent injury and advocate for smart public policy to reduce road related injuries, pedestrian fatalities, drownings, burns, poisonings and more. Since 1988, Safe Kids has helped reduce the U.S. childhood death rate from unintentional injury by 60 percent. Working together, we can do much more for kids everywhere.

No parent should endure the tragedy of losing a child such as Eddie. To keep Massachusetts kids safer on our roads and prevent these tragedies, we support the passing of SB2362/HB4421. Thank you for your consideration and support on this issue, and we are ready to help in any way we can.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Deirdre Walsh'.

Coalition Coordinator
Safe Kids Massachusetts

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Anthony Jones'.

Director of Public Policy
Safe Kids Worldwide

Please contact: Deidre Walsh, Safe Kids Massachusetts Coordinator, at 617.355.5400 or Deidre.Walsh@childrens.harvard.edu; or Shane Simenstad, Public Policy Assistant, at 202.292.3234 or ssimenstad@safekids.org

*Avani Rao, a Safe Kids Worldwide Public Policy intern and rising senior at the University of Notre Dame, assisted in the research and drafting of this letter.

¹ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (2016). Traffic Safety Facts. Retrieved from <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812493>

² National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (2018). Fatality Analysis Reporting System. Retrieved from <https://www-fars.nhtsa.dot.gov/Main/index.aspx>

³ CBS Boston (2017, November 21). 6-Year-Old Boy Hit By Car In Westwood Dies. Retrieved from <http://boston.cbslocal.com/2017/11/21/boy-hit-by-car-westwood-dies/>