



September 17, 2018

Governor Edmund G. Brown  
The State Capitol, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown:

We join together as eleven Safe Kids coalitions and Safe Kids Worldwide in urging you to sign AB 3077, legislation intended to make California's child bike helmet law more effective as a life saver, especially of our children.

Unintentional injury is the leading cause of death and hospitalization for California's children through age 19. Within that number, road crashes are the leading cause of unintentional injury, including bike and pedestrian deaths. The following are key factors supporting Assemblywoman Caballero's legislation to make the state's 55-year-old bike helmet law effective:

- Helmets reduce the risk of head injury by at least 45 percent, brain injury by 33 percent, facial injury by 27 percent and fatal injury by 29 percent.<sup>1</sup>
- Laws requiring helmet use are effective in reducing bike fatalities among children.<sup>2</sup>
- The total cost of pedestrian injury among children ages 14 and younger is \$5.2 billion per year.<sup>3</sup>
- Nationally, bike related fatalities are on the rise. There has been a 6 percent increase in bike fatalities since 2006, and a 12.2 percent increase between 2014-2015.<sup>4</sup>
- In the fall of 2017 the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reported that in 2016 California's rate of fatal traffic related crashes increased more than 10% over 2015, and that one-third of these fatalities involved bicycle and pedestrian crashes.<sup>5</sup>

Notwithstanding the evidence on the importance of bike helmets, their use has declined to less than 20 percent according to recent school surveys. It was 65 percent in the 1990s.<sup>5</sup>

The reason we believe California's childhood helmet safety law needs reform is that it carries an exceedingly high fine of \$197. In comparison, the maximum fine for a parent/driver's failure to use a car seat is \$100. As a consequence, the bike helmet law is seldom enforced. AB 3077 will transform our state's bike helmet safety laws into a "fix-it-ticket," meaning that a bike helmet citation may be waived when a parent shows they have obtained a helmet, pledges to use it and completes a bicycle safety course — or they can pay a fine. Thus, the new law would make education a part of the sanction for failing to wear a helmet. We are optimistic the law enforcement community will cite young bicyclists for riding in a life-threatening way, and it is significant that the California Association of Highway Patrolmen (CAHP) supports AB 3077.

We join the CAHP and the many public and private stakeholders of the California Unintentional Injury Prevention Strategic Plan Project in asking you to sign AB 3077 into law.

Sincerely,

Safe Kids Central California  
Safe Kids Inland Empire  
Safe Kids Los Angeles East  
Safe Kids Los Angeles West  
Safe Kids Orange County (CA)

Safe Kids San Benito County  
Safe Kids San Diego  
Safe Kids Santa Barbara County  
Safe Kids Santa Clara/San Mateo  
Safe Kids Sonoma County

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<sup>1</sup> Ross LT, Brinson MK, Ross TP. Parenting Influences on Bicycle Helmet Rules and Estimations of Children's Helmet Use. *The Journal of Psychology*. 2014; 148(2); Dellinger AM, Kresnow M. Bicycle helmet use among children in the United States: The effects of legislation, personal and household factors. *Journal of Safety Research*. 2010. Accessed September 17, 2018. Available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/8953997>.

<sup>2</sup> Goodwin A, Kirkley B, Sandt L, Hall W, Thomas L, O'Brien N, Summerlin D. Countermeasures That Work: A Highway Safety Countermeasure Guide for State Highway Safety Offices, Seventh Edition, 2013. Washington, D.C.: National Highway Safety Administration; 2013. Report No.: DOT HS 811 727. Accessed September 17, 2018. Available at: <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=2ahUKEwiA5eD0icldAhUGcq0KHZ0sBWQQFIAAegQIABAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nhtsa.gov%2Fstaticfiles%2Fnti%2Fpdf%2F811727.pdf&usg=AOvVaw3qAj5ug3MMO4v-mxZsXb5k>.

<sup>3</sup> Miller T, Zaloshja E, et al, "Pedestrian and Pedalcyclist Injury Costs in the United States by Age and Injury Severity," 2004. Accessed August 31, 2018. Available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3217422/>.

<sup>4</sup> "Pedestrian and Bicyclist Crash Statistics," Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center. Accessed August 30, 2018. Available at [http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/data/factsheet\\_crash.cfm](http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/data/factsheet_crash.cfm).

<sup>5</sup> California Unintentional Injury Prevention Strategic Plan Project.