

October 31, 2017

Subject: Testimony in support of House Bills 4198 (Rep. Alexander) and 4265 (Rep. Hughes)

This testimony represents the thoughts and concerns of the survivors of the June 7, 2016, bicycling tragedy in Kalamazoo, Michigan. We also lost five fellow cyclists and dear friends to an impaired driver on that day.

We speak from personal experience in saying that we have a high level of discomfort when vehicles pass too closely. The majority of vehicle drivers give us enough room, but it takes only one thoughtless, belligerent, or impaired driver to pass too close and cause injury or death.

As a group, we are concerned that Michigan is one of only a few states which does not mandate a safe passing distance for vulnerable roadway users. Further, we believe the driving public is under-educated regarding the rights of bicyclists and other vulnerable roadway users and the need to share the roads safely with those users.

As we have seen before with driver safety habits and seatbelt usage, drivers' education combined with appropriate and targeted traffic safety laws are a powerful, proven and cost effective solution to making our roadways safer for everyone and for saving lives.

Michigan needs both a requirement for safe passing distance and a means to educate drivers of that requirement. These two bills accomplish those needs. We strongly support passage of both of these bills.

Respectfully,

Paul Runnels, Richland, MI

Sheila Jeske, Richland, MI

Paul Gobble, Richland, MI

Jennifer Johnson, Kalamazoo, MI

