

Dear Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Paul Selden. I'm the Director of Road Safety for the Kalamazoo Bicycle Club. I'm also a husband, father of three, a grandfather of five, a (former now retired) life-long business owner and a long-time resident of the great State of Michigan. Like you I am working hard to make Michigan an even better place to live, learn, work and play.

As part of my effort to help make Michigan even better in many ways, I am writing to respectfully urge you to support Senate Bills 1029 and 1030 when they come before your Committee on September 20.

As you know, these bills help extend protections for Vulnerable Roadway Users at a time when more protection is desperately needed. I believe these bills will correct an inequity and help close the gap in protections already enjoyed by other vulnerable users such as construction workers, children in designated school zones and others. Bicyclists, pedestrians, and wheelchair users need the same protections.

I speak from personal experience. I'm glad I'm able to write this email at all.

Even while riding as safely as I possibly could and while following the rules of the road, a motorist sideswiped me and could have killed me. EVERY INCH made a difference between my life and death. That motorist got off with more or less just a slap on the wrist compared to the crimes she was charge with. The hit and run and driving with a revoked license charges were plea bargained away. A motorist once deliberately zoomed around me, within inches, then slammed on her brakes right in front of me. Fortunately, since we were both coming up to a red light and I was already slowing down, I was able to stop in time. I asked why she did it. She yelled at me, "You shouldn't be on the road!"

That is just my story. Almost every bicyclist I know has had similar stories to tell, or much worse. Like cyclists around the world, I was devastated by the bicycling tragedy in Kalamazoo on June 7, 2016. Since then the deaths and injuries of bicyclists ... among the most vulnerable legal users of the road ... continue. League of Michigan Bicyclists Tour Director Scott Elliott was hit in July and World Champion triathlete Karen McKeachie lost her life on Friday, August 26th. There have been way too many than I care to list, state-wide.

Less than 200 pounds of bike and rider will ALWAYS lose in a crash with two tons of moving metal. Bicyclists don't have the equivalent of seat belts, collapsible steering columns or air bags. We need the extra protection you can give us, and the sooner the better.

The bills you before you will give law enforcement an added tool when trying to keep the public safe, and will give the community another way to educate the public and raise awareness that we need to share the road safely and civilly.

We know that bicycling is growing fast in Michigan. We know there is no one thing that will prevent every crash, but bike-vehicle crashes are piling up way too often, at an accelerating rate. I think such horrors are likely to spike up even more if nothing is done.

If the Senate passes the bills before you as written, I firmly believe they will save lives and make Michigan more livable in more ways than one, for all of us. For all these reasons and more, I respectfully urge you to support bills SB 1029 and SB 1030.

I am confident that our local leaders in the Kalamazoo area are doing the right thing. I hope and pray you will, too.

Regards,

Paul Selden  
Director of Road Safety

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