



To: Senate Committee on Transportation
From: Travis Lowe
AAA Kansas
Date: January 23, 2025
Re: Support of SB 8

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to offer remarks in support of SB 8.

I am Travis Lowe appearing on behalf of AAA Kansas. Since AAA's founding in 1902, the not-for-profit, fully tax-paying organization has been a leader and advocate for the safety and security of all travelers. AAA proudly serves over 350,000 Kansans. On behalf of AAA, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to offer support for legislation that will improve road safety for auto drivers as well as those maintaining Kansas roads.

SB 8 works to protect both drivers who are stranded on the side of the highway dealing with a disabled vehicle and other drivers on the road.

By disabled vehicles, we are referring to vehicles on the side of the highway that are displaying hazard warning signal lamps, road flares or caution signals, including traffic cones, caution signs or reflective triangles.

It is very common to see disabled vehicles on the side of a highway. The drivers and occupants may be changing a tire, the hood is propped open, possibly waiting for a tow truck. Whatever the case, this applies to vehicles with people inside or outside their vehicle waiting for help.

SB 8 says if a driver is on a two-lane highway and comes upon a disabled vehicle, the driver must proceed with caution by slowing down as they pass the disabled vehicle. The bill language states that if the driver is on a multi-lane highway, like an interstate, and comes upon a disabled vehicle, the driver needs to switch to the opposite lane(s), if possible, or slow down as they pass the disabled vehicle.

This may sound like common sense but sadly, disabled vehicles are not protected within the current Kansas 'Move Over' laws, and we have seen the consequences.

Kansas crash statistics show in just five years from 2018-2023 resulted with 10 fatalities, averaging three deaths a year. In the same time period, 994 empty vehicles were struck while on the side of road. Additionally, 82 crashes occurred with someone in a vehicle while on the side of road during this same time period. This averages nearly 200 crashes a year.

Kansas already has a "slow down or move over" law for emergency vehicles, tow trucks, utility and maintenance vehicles. But not for "disabled vehicles."

This bill, however, does not apply to a vehicle left unattended on the side of the road. Those vehicles are usually marked by law enforcement with an orange tag to be towed.

We appreciate the Senate's support of this bill during the 2024 session as it was recommended by this committee and subsequently passed 38-2.

We respectfully urge your support of the bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak on this matter and I am happy to answer questions at the appropriate time.

Respectfully,

Travis Lowe



“Slow Down, Move Over”: Recent Roadside Fatalities Related to Disabled/Stopped Vehicles in Kansas

Background Information in Support of Kansas SB 8 “Move Over For Disabled Vehicles” Bill

- On January 1, 2025, Ernestina Eumana-Alvarez, 58, and her infant grandson, Christian Gutierrez, died on the Kansas Turnpike I-35 in Sumner County when their van, which had been involved in a crash, was then struck by a semi-trailer truck.
- Thomas Reller, 78, and his 27-year-old passenger, Octavia Reller, died on Nov. 11, 2024 on I-35 in Sedgwick County when their vehicle rear-ended a semi-trailer truck pulled over after it had struck a deer.
- 44-year-old Richard Anthony Hall of Overland Park was standing outside his broken-down vehicle on the right shoulder of I-135 in Harvey County when he was hit and killed by a semi-trailer truck on Aug. 3, 2024.
- Benjamin Van Buskirk, 17, of Olathe was struck and killed on I-35 in Johnson County on July 27, 2024 after he had stopped to help the victim of a previous crash.
- On Sept. 7, 2023, Jhon Reid, 20, was outside his vehicle on the left shoulder of K-18 in Riley County, checking damage from a deer collision, when he was struck and killed by another vehicle.
- Adrienne Deal, 40, of Cheney, and her child both died on January 1, 2023 when a semi-trailer truck rear-ended their disabled car on U.S. Highway 54 in Kiowa County
- A crash on Dec. 11, 2022 on I-35 east of Wellsville in Franklin County, claimed the life of 21-year-old Matthew O’Neill. He exited his disabled vehicle and was struck and killed.
- On Nov. 10, 2022, 20-year-old Christian Evans and 18-year-old Emily Stein were trying to change a flat tire along I-135 in Wichita, when they were stuck by a vehicle and killed.
- Lori Maxwell, 54, who was outside her vehicle along I-35 in Franklin County on Oct. 29, 2021, was struck and killed by a semi-trailer truck, which fled the scene.
- 16-year-old Carole Adamson was hit and killed by another vehicle while standing outside her disabled SUV on K-18 highway in Rooks County on April 28, 2021.
- 73-year-old Sidney Leroy Huff was changing a tire on the side of I-35 in Franklin County, a few miles northeast of Ottawa, Kan., when he was struck and killed by a semi-trailer truck on Feb. 18, 2020.
- On I-35 in Johnson County, 22-year-old Kendyl Walter got out of her car after an accident on January 11, 2018, and was struck and killed by her own vehicle after it was hit by another driver.
- Mark Makovec, 45, of Chanute was changing a flat tire on Sept. 1, 2017 along U.S. 400, in Greenwood County. He was struck and killed by a vehicle.
- On Nov. 4, 2016, a vehicle traveling on I-70 near S.E. Rice Road in Topeka struck two people who were changing a tire on their vehicle, with the driver leaving the scene. Anthony Espinosa, 29, one of the people struck, was killed in the incident.

