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Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 274

Chairman Mike Petersen and Members of the Senate Transportation Committee

My name is Andy Fry, I live and ride my bike in the City of Topeka, but have had the distinct pleasure to ride throughout Kansas from Johnson City to Garden City to Wichita, Hays, Manhattan, Sedan, Garden City, Galena, Lawrence, and all places in between. I am a League Certified Instructor of safe bicycle riding techniques with the League of American Bicyclists and I ride with my daughter to her daycare almost every morning. Thank you for the opportunity to share some thoughts this morning on Senate Bill 274 that addresses negligent driving and how it affects us all.

State trend

In 2016, KDOT identified from official reports that 20% of crashes occurred because a road user "Failed to give full time and attention" to driving.

In 2016 the State of Kansas categorized 2,351 crashes as being caused by the driver not paying attention to the operation of their vehicle. Of those 974 persons were injured and killed 15 of our Kansas neighbors.

With 46 deaths over 6 years in Kansas due to drivers reading a newspaper, doing makeup or eating while driving, that's essentially a death every other month because someone couldn't wait to read the sports scores from last night.

We have a problem in Kansas involving road users failing to focus on the road. And we need to fix this behavior without someone having to get hit or killed in order to prosecute.

National Trend

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration the total number of crash fatalities has risen steadily in crashes involving pedestrians from 4109 pedestrian fatalities in 2009 nationally to 5375 pedestrian fatalities in 2016

Similarly the NHTSA indicates the total number crash fatalities of someone riding a bicycle has nationally risen from 628 fatalities of a person on a bicycle to 818 fatalities on a bicycle

This leads us to say that it can be presumed that the increased distraction of drivers interacting with those other roadway users through use of cell phones and other modern choices of negligence from driving has contributed to this increase with the proliferation of smartphones and other devices of "connection".

The League of American Bicyclists rates states on an annual basis for their bikeability in terms of infrastructure, Education, Legislation, Enforcement, policies and evaluation. Kansas has been dropping as of late and currently sits at 47 amongst other states.

Whether that's a fair assessment is perhaps up for debate, but they mention the need for having comprehensive distracted driving laws.

We have a 3 foot law. check

We have a cell phone related law. check.

We have a Standard Traffic Ordinance that covers collisions.

But we do not have a law inhibiting or penalizing those that don't focus on their drive BEFORE they hit or kill another road user.

This is Senate Bill 274. I strongly urge you to think of the safety of your kids, grandkids and relatives in supporting Senate Bill 274.

Thank you for your time,

Andy Fry