

Testimony in support of House Bill 2088
House Transportation Committee
February 6, 2019

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee:

I am Bill Lucero, lobbyist for the Kaw Valley Bicycle Club. In the past few weeks I have spoken to each of you individually regarding the overall need for this legislation. Today, because my friend, Joe Saia, lacks sufficient strength to be here this afternoon due to his struggle with leukemia, he asked that I read a statement on his behalf regarding his wife being killed by a reckless driver. This tragedy might have been prevented had the current proposal been law 10 years ago and violations of negligent driving had been vigorously enforced across the state.

On June 7th, 2015, Joe's wife, Glenda Taylor, a Professor of Art at Washburn University, was one of 75 cyclists competing in the Kansas State Bicycle Time Trial Championships in the southeast Kansas town of Walnut. Many of the participants were warming up for the competition amid tents and bright large orange warning signs and cones as a driver of a pickup truck passed the race starting ramp. The driver would later admit to being aware of the race and remarking to a passenger that he saw Glenda from ~ ½ mile away and again at ~ ¼ mile away. At 8:25 that morning, Glenda was struck from behind by the full front of that truck traveling at 35 miles per hour with no apparent evasive action taken. Upon impact she was thrown 169 feet into a roadside ditch. Gouge marks in the asphalt from Glenda's broken bicycle's seat tube indicated that she was riding just 13 inches inside of the white line on the side of the roadway.

Bones in both of Glenda's arms and legs, above and below her elbows and knees, were instantly broken by the blunt force trauma. Glenda's aortic artery was torn from her heart and her pelvis was crushed. She died quietly in a ditch in the arms of another cyclist. The driver of the pickup was arrested and charged with 2nd degree murder which was ultimately plead down to involuntary vehicular homicide. He was sentenced to 36 months in the State Penitentiary but was granted full probation and a 60 day jail sentence. In May, 2017, while on probation, he was charged with running a stop sign at 50 mph. While awaiting his probation hearing under a "no drive" order, he drove to a gas station, filled his tank and drove off without paying. His license was rescinded at his felony probation hearing, and he received an additional 30 day sentence in the County jail.

I raised the possibility earlier that had this bill been a law statewide years ago, perhaps drivers like this individual might have been less likely to operate a vehicle so heedlessly. Then again, maybe they never learn. Who can say? But Glenda's legacy demands that this legislation be enacted. The Kaw Valley Bicycle Club joins with Joe to implore you for your support of HB 2088.

Bill Lucero
Lobbyist
Kaw Valley Bicycle Club
785-232-5958