



*Testimony in support of
S.1905/H.2877 An Act to reduce traffic fatalities
Submitted to the Joint Committee on Transportation
By Lois Levin, LWVMA Transportation Specialist
June 13, 2017*

This bill would take many steps to improve safety for pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers. It is entirely consistent with the LWVMA position on transportation, which supports increased public transportation services and other viable alternatives to reduce vehicle miles traveled.

The last omnibus safety bill was enacted nearly 10 years ago. There is considerably more pedestrian activity, bicycling, and cars on the road now and still far too many deaths on our roads.

The bill follows Boston's lead to: (i) add side guards and truck safety measures (convex and crossover mirrors) to state owned and state-contracted vehicles; (ii) improve bicycle crash reporting; (iii) make the default speed limit 25 mph where it is currently 30 mph; (iv) allow municipalities to install limited traffic safety cameras; (v) create a statewide bicycling and pedestrian safety curriculum for elementary students; (vi) prohibit using mobile devices while operating a motor vehicle; (vii) require that bicyclists use a rear red light and red reflector at night; (viii) require motor vehicles to keep a distance of three feet when passing cyclists, pedestrians (and other vulnerable road users) at 30 mph or less (and one foot more for every increase of 10 mph); (ix) allow bicyclists to treat a red light like a stop sign if there is no road to the right; (x) require the state to issue new guidelines for signage for non-motorized routes; (xi) specify that bicyclists may pass to the right of motor vehicles in travel lanes even when the vehicles are not moving; (xii) require that motor vehicles yield to bicyclists at intersections of roads and bike paths where crossings are marked; and (xiii) require that the state develop a standardized reporting tool for first responders to a pedestrian or bicyclist accident.

Our roads are for all road users, including vulnerable road users such as bicyclists and pedestrians. This legislation will reduce the loss of human life and serious injury on those roads by making them substantially safer; that, in turn, will encourage more bicycling by responsible people who have long been reluctant to bicycle or have stopped bicycling because so many roads do not feel safe. We all have family members and friends who have suffered injury or death on our roads. People who have been reluctant in recent years to bike on our streets or to be pedestrians in business districts of many Massachusetts cities and towns will be inclined to walk and bike more if this bill is enacted.

LWVMA urges the committee to do its part to make streets safer for bicyclists and pedestrians by reporting this bill out with a favorable recommendation.