

Testimony on Crosswalks and School Zones
By
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Before the
House Transportation Committee
September 20, 2012

Good Morning Mister Chairman and members of the House Transportation Committee. My name is Dorie Weik. I am the public affairs coordinator for AAA Central Penn. I have been involved in developing and teaching programs on pedestrian, bicycle and school bus safety; primarily in the schools for more than 30 years. Thank you for giving AAA the opportunity to provide input about the issue of Crosswalks and School Zones.

Pedestrian Safety Issues have been a concern since the early 1900's. Chicago Motor Club President, in the early 1920's, deemed traffic to be so hazardous that it was unsafe for children to cross streets safely to and from school. With no availability of additional police officers, Charles Hayes then proposed one of the first steps of an educational component for pedestrian safety which has become known as the AAA School Safety Patrol. This program which has grown Nationwide to over 650,000 safety patrollers assisting students in various capacities including crossing streets safely to and from school, has contributed to reducing pedestrian fatalities by 87%.

Pennsylvania Pedestrian related crashes represent 3.6% of the total reported traffic crashes, however, they account for 11.6% of all traffic crash deaths. Reported crashes in Pennsylvania involving pedestrians have increased in 2 of the last 5 years. Since this bill has been introduced, 2 pedestrian accidents have taken place in our area. Out of 149 pedestrian fatalities last year, 70 transpired while entering a crossing or in a specified location. While the majority of pedestrian injuries occur in cities, higher speeds in townships produce higher percentages in those areas.

More than half of pedestrians injured were on a local road and the majority of pedestrian deaths occur on a non-interstate state roadways. Therefore these injuries and fatalities are taking place in our communities. Crosswalks are crucial to maintain safe passage for our pedestrians. Educating the motoring public and the pedestrians will always be essential.

The American Automobile Association has long since recognized value in accident- prevention through education. The "School's Open" posters are distributed throughout communities to warn the motorist to slow down and be observant to children walking to and from school and to bus stops. Pedestrian, Bicycle and School Bus programs are offered to schools to educate the youths in the respective fields.

It is a known fact that the motoring public continues to need educated on the terminology "Yield". Clarifying "Stop and Yield" supports a decisive instruction on what to do.

We thank Representative Marsico and support the sponsors of this legislation amending Title 75, specifically Section 3327 and Section 3542. We would encourage the members of the General Assembly to pass this bill and endorse these components to ensure the safety of Pennsylvania's Pedestrians.