

Testimony in Support of Bill No. 274

Jan. 29, 2018

Dear Chairman Mike Petersen and Members of the Senate Transportation Committee,

Thank you for taking time to consider this amendment, which for me represents less of an "issue" and more of a daily experience.

I am a bicycle commuter in Wichita Kansas and have had a historical average of one collision a year - that is, being struck by a distracted driver approximately 4-6 times in as many years. The general punchline I hear from a driver who has just hit me is the same: "I didn't even SEE you." From the enforcement side of things, just this summer, officers responding when a driver failed to yield and ran over me in the bike lane were unsure how to enforce a ticket. In the end, although my bike was bent sideways and he admitted fault, they let him leave **without penalty** because our local ordinances were "unclear." I had to fight tooth and nail through various channels over several months to clarify the issue and have his grave error recognized with a penalty.

Over the years, I've experienced every other iteration of distraction you can imagine - the head-down texters, the distracted phone-callers drifting between lanes, the slow-moving Pokemon Go'ers sitting through a green light waiting for their character to hatch, even a nurse in scrubs reading notes of some kind propped up on her steering wheel as she drove through a residential neighborhood, only barely avoiding a collision because I look so actively ahead and was able to slam on my brakes. In most instances, the best I can do is wave angrily or risk rolling up next to the offending vehicle at a red light to kindly remind them "It's not worth it," which I do more frequently than you might believe. Most times I'm utterly helpless to inform better behavior and, without an amendment like this, I'm not confident in the ability of law enforcement to do much either. In my 6+ years commuting, choosing to ride a bike means committing to the daily struggle, staying visible and vocal as a way of staying ALIVE, which is why I'm speaking to you today.

The omission of this amendment would be an insult to any responsible human who is doing the work of moving themselves with cautious optimism along Kansas roads. If we don't penalize the reckless humans who choose to multitask while operating motor vehicles in our shared space, we leave drivers without clear boundaries, and lawmakers and law enforcement personnel without the resources they need to support effective change. Today, we can put the literal money where our mouths are and make the humans who choose to disregard the privilege of driving pay for their distracted behavior. Your support for this amendment will actively remind the drivers of Kansas that choosing ANY secondary task over the important work of safely operating a motor vehicle means putting the lives of other humans in danger. Please empower your fellow law makers and our law enforcement personnel to hold us all to a higher standard of behavior on the road.

Thank you, and with much love from the bike lane,

Christina Calloun | Marketing Copywriter | Downtown Wichita Bicycle Commuter

1721 E. Victor St. | Wichita KS | 67214 | 316.207.6048 | c-calloun@live.com