

Building Safer Streets Act - S. 3246

PREVENTING LOSS OF LIVES ON UNSAFE STREETS



WHAT IT IS

The Building Safer Streets Act (S. 3246) aims to prevent the loss of lives on unsafe streets and improve street infrastructure. The initiative emphasizes considering the safety of all road users in highway and transit programs, and prioritizing the safety of vulnerable road users like bicyclists and pedestrians. Moreover, it recognizes that unsafe, poorly designed streets serve as a significant barrier to economic revitalization, particularly in smaller cities and towns.

The Building Safer Streets Act aims to facilitate innovative, locally-sensitive street designs and improvements by empowering government agencies at all levels, from federal to local, with resources to cut through bureaucratic obstacles and make streets safer. Notably, it seeks to revamp street safety-focused grants, such as the Safe Streets for All program, ensuring that funds are accessible to smaller communities, which often have the greatest need for safer streets.

WHAT IT DOES

The Building Safer Streets Act:

- Directs the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to provide better guidance to clarify how they expect grant recipients to “consider” all modes, and removes impediments to make it easier to build complete streets/multimodal designs recommended by FHWA.
- Brings needed accountability to the process of updating the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) by requiring public accountability for decisions that expressly prohibit or require certain designs and limit local flexibility
- Ensures FHWA guidelines and guidance distinguish between rural, suburban, and urban needs, and adjusts the Safe Streets for All grant program to address the specific needs of small and rural communities

WHAT IT DOES (continued) —————→

- Adjusts performance measure requirements to prevent FHWA from considering higher speed limits as a beneficial contributor to “value of travel time” metrics, and prevents FHWA from accepting an expected increase in road fatalities as an acceptable safety performance target

WHY IT MATTERS —————→

- Roadway fatalities have reached the highest level in 41 years. Older adults, children, people with disabilities, those living on reservations, and people of color are all more likely to experience traffic violence.
- Nearly 7,400 pedestrians were killed on the road in 2021, and bicyclist and pedestrian roadway fatalities are increasing at a faster rate than other roadway fatalities.
- Bicyclists and pedestrians account for 12 percent of transportation trips but 20 percent of fatalities.
- To reduce these fatalities, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) requires communities to consider all road users in their planning and design. However, communities have expressed interest in clearer guidelines, community-context-based guidance, and flexibility to implement known safe infrastructure that is subject to burdensome regulation.

SUPPORT THE BUILDING SAFER STREETS ACT TO HELP PREVENT THE LOSS OF LIVES ON UNSAFE STREETS AND IMPROVE STREET INFRASTRUCTURE.

CO-SPONSOR THIS BILL

The bill, S. 3246, is sponsored by Senator John Fetterman. To co-sponsor the bill, please contact madeleine_marr@fetterman.senate.gov.

