

August 9, 2022

Assemblymember Tasha Boerner Horvath
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814



Re: Oppose AB 1713 (Boerner Horvath) Allowing bicycle riders to ride through stop signs

Dear Assembly Member Boerner Horvath:

The California Coalition for Children's Safety and Health (CCCSH) along with other children's safety organizations, traffic safety organizations, law enforcement, children's hospitals/trauma centers, and pediatric trauma surgeons continue to oppose riding bikes through stop signs as you propose in AB 1713. Though we appreciate your thought of not directly encouraging children and teens to ride through stop signs, this bill continues to create unsafe bicycle riding behaviors and will lead to more bicycle crash fatalities, including children and teens. NHTSA bicycle crash data shows the leading cause of fatal bicycle crashes are due to inappropriate yielding. NHTSA bike crash data involving children and teens shows 30% of crashes occur due to inappropriate yielding at four way stop intersections. A small number of California bicycle clubs continue to push for this dangerous traffic law change but they are wrong and their dangerous desires to ride through stop signs is not supported by the majority of California's bicycle clubs and even fewer of California's estimated 500,000 bicycle commuters. Parents of children and teenagers hearing about this bill think it is dangerous and are appalled such roadway policy is even being contemplated by the Legislature.

Research into younger children and teenage brain development and cognitive skills when it comes to bicycle riding clearly shows two things:

- Asking children and teens to try and overcome brain development limitations involving the separate skills of balance and peripheral awareness of traffic dangers, especially when crossing roadways, is inherently dangerous. This is why inappropriate yielding shows up as such a high underlying cause of bicycle vs. vehicle crashes.
- Brain and cognitive research also make it clear that children and teens will follow older children and adults in terms of not stopping at stop signs putting them at far greater risk than experienced bicycle riders. The crash data shows even experienced bicycle riders make yielding judgement errors resulting in inappropriate yielding causing crashes. Leading kids into this bad traffic behavior is wrong and deadly.

The bill would create opportunities for children and teens to learn dangerous bicycle riding behaviors as they observe adults not stopping at stop signs. There are far more productive ways we all can work together to make bicycle riding safer in our state, but AB 1713 is far from what we should all be focused on regarding bicycle riding safety. The bill is once again being sold as necessary to allow bicycle riders to "keep their momentum up" when riding through intersections.

The bill also ignores the fact that California already has one of the highest bicycle crash fatalities rates in the nation. AB 1713 also ignores the fact that traffic unintentional injuries are one of the leading causes of death and hospitalization of California's teens, youth, and children, which includes bicycle crash caused fatalities. Children and teens learn by example, you cannot set up an unsafe traffic behavior and think that behavior will not rub off on our kids and teens. AB 1713

is a dangerous traffic safety law experiment. **Losing even one more bicycle rider – child or adult’s - life is not worth this traffic law change.**

The Governor rightfully vetoed your AB 122 correctly citing the dangers of this type of traffic law change. There is nothing in your AB 1713 that will change the underlying reason this is not sound or safe traffic behavior. Your bill also ignores the fact that the millions of others using California’s roadways are expecting everyone else to stop at stop signs. All drivers, all pedestrians, and all reasonable bicycle riders know that a stop sign means stop for safety. There is a reason that the vast majority of California bicycle rider clubs, and more than 98% of California’s bicycle commuters did not sign on in support of AB 122 and are not supporting AB 1713. It is not good traffic safety policy.

We are happy to work with you on the many other legitimate ways to help make California’s roads and streets safer for all ages of bicycle riders but riding through stop signs is not an issue on which we can agree. We are happy to work with you to change appropriate bicycle riding citations into reasonable civil fines or fix-it-tickets requiring bicycle safety courses – even on-line courses – like we did for bicycle helmet violations through AB 3077 (Caballero) Chapter 502 of 2018. If you or your staff would like to discuss this issue with us we can be reached at Catherine Barankin, cbarankin@aol.com or Steve Barrow at sbarrow88@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Cathy Barankin

Catherine Barankin, Executive Director
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Steve B

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Cc: Governor Gavin Newsom
California Highway Patrol Commissioner Amanda Ray
Safe Kids Worldwide
Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety
American Academy of Pediatrics
KidsAndCars
Children’s Advocacy Institute University of San Diego School of Law
Impact Teen Drivers
California Association of Highway Patrolmen
Police Officers Research Association of California
Trauma Center Association of America