

# Sarah Debbink Langenkamp Active Transportation Safety Act (H.R. 1668 / S. 3964)



## WHAT IT IS

Sarah Debbink Langenkamp was a U.S. diplomat and mother of two boys who had been evacuated from Ukraine in the summer of 2022 only to be killed weeks later while riding her bike home on a road in Bethesda, Maryland. Her death, following her evacuation from a war zone, occurring so near the nation’s capital, has highlighted the worsening trend of traffic violence in the United States and sparked calls for change. This bill is named after Sarah in the hope that remembrance of her life, service, and tragic death will prevent further unnecessary fatalities on our streets.

This bill highlights the need to fill gaps in biking and walking networks and makes it easier for states and local governments to use Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) dollars as a “local match” to build safe bicycling and pedestrian infrastructure through HSIP and the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).

The Transportation Alternatives Program was created in 2012 to give local governments access to a small percentage of federal transportation funds for local priorities. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) included a new policy meant to give state DOTs the opportunity to use safety funds as local matches for TAP projects that address local safety concerns. However, the IIJA language requires the state to identify every specific project that would be eligible. The Sarah Dennick Langenkamp Act would clarify language to make it easier for the state to take advantage of this flexibility by allowing the state to match local government-identified projects while also ensuring the funds are used only on safety-oriented projects.

## WHAT IT DOES

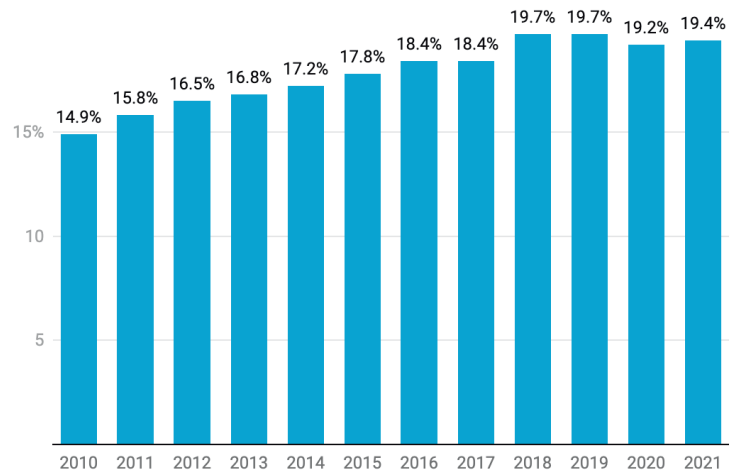
While it does not spend any new money or create any new mandates on states, it does:

- help reduce the disconnect between state-identified and locally-identified priorities by giving the state the flexibility to spend safety dollars on local priorities.
- give states flexibility to fund bicycle and walking safety projects with 100% federal funds, including for locally identified safety priorities.
- make it easier for states and local governments to fund the safety projects identified in IIJA-funded safety plans. Over 1,000 communities received IIJA funding to write safety plans in just the first two years!
- highlight the need to fill gaps in biking and walking networks, and makes such projects eligible for funding under HSIP.

## WHY IT MATTERS

- Bicyclists and pedestrians account for 12% of transportation trips but 20% of fatalities. In 2021, overall traffic fatalities decreased slightly, while bicyclist and pedestrian fatalities increased by 10% and 2%, respectively.
- Even as overall roadway fatalities stabilized in the first half of 2022, bicyclist fatalities increased by 8% and pedestrian fatalities by 2% while crashes involving large trucks increased by 10%.
- Transportation Alternatives includes a set aside for communities with a population under 5000. It is those rural communities, and low-income communities, that have the hardest time finding a local match, and have a harder time finding 20% for a local match.

**Bicyclist and Pedestrian Fatalities as a Percentage of All Traffic Fatalities**



2020 saw an overall increase in traffic fatalities resulting in bike/ ped as a percentage going down. However preliminary data of 2021 and 2022 show it on the rise again. Data Source: NHTSA Fatalities Analysis Reporting System

## PROVEN COUNTER-MEASURES

- FHWA has found that adding bicycle lanes can reduce total crashes up to 49% on urban 4-lane undivided collector and local roads, and reduce total crashes up to 30% on urban 2-lane undivided collector and local roads.
- Separated bicycle lanes may provide further safety benefits. FHWA anticipates research coming out soon.
- FHWA has found that adding sidewalks can reduce pedestrian crashes by 65-89% in neighborhoods, and adding a shoulder on a rural road can reduce pedestrian crashes by 71%.

## CO-SPONSOR THIS BILL

The Bipartisan House bill is sponsored by Reps. Blumenauer (D-OR) and Raskin(D-MD).The Senate bill is sponsored by Senators Cardin (D-MD), Van Hollen (D-MD) and Baldwin (D-WI). To co-sponsor the House bill please contact Zoe (Blumenauer) at [Zoe.Walker@mail.house.gov](mailto:Zoe.Walker@mail.house.gov). To co-sponsor the Senate bill, please contact Andrew at [Andrew\\_Perlstein@Cardin.senate.gov](mailto:Andrew_Perlstein@Cardin.senate.gov).

