

THE SARAH DEBBINK LANGENKAMP ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION SAFETY ACT

Giving States New Tools to Build Safer Roads



At-A-Glance

This bill is named in honor of Sarah Debbink Langenkamp, a U.S. diplomat, wife, and mother who was tragically killed while bicycling home from her children's school mere weeks after her family was evacuated from Ukraine due to the war. This bill takes a **commonsense approach** to making our roads safer without imposing new mandates or increasing federal spending.

This bill makes it easier for states to create continuous, safe routes for people walking and bicycling. It also allows states and local governments to use federal funding dedicated to safety, Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), on projects that keep people walking and bicycling safe on our nation's roads. This bill makes it easier for local governments to build safety projects by enabling HSIP funds to be used as the "local match" for safety projects funded through the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).

This legislation does not create new federal programs or increase overall spending—it simply ensures existing highway safety funds can be used more effectively to support practical and proven safety solutions.

What This Bill Does



Improves Road Safety with Proven Solutions

- Helps states connect existing infrastructure to reduce conflicts between drivers and vulnerable road users
- Encourages proven safety countermeasures, like high visibility crosswalks, so taxpayer dollars go to solutions that work



Respects State and Local Control

- No new regulations. States decide which projects to fund based on their own safety priorities
- Creates opportunity to implement safety priorities based on state and local data-driven assessments, ensuring funding goes where it's needed most, including to local priorities



Maximizes Taxpayer Dollars

- More flexibility, not more spending. This bill simply gives states the option to use the existing Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) to more efficiently address roadway dangers



How This Bill Supports Local Communities

1. TAP includes a set aside for communities with a population under 5,000. TAP also requires a 20 percent local match, which is a significant barrier for small, rural communities. This bill gives states new tools to reduce the local match required for TAP projects that address safety, making it easier for small, rural communities to build local projects.
2. Over 77 percent of the nation's population is now covered by Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grants to develop plans to improve roadway safety. Without this bill, there is no process for safety funding to turn these plans into projects.

Why It Matters

- Every American—whether they drive, walk, or bike—deserves safe roads. But too many lives are lost due to preventable crashes. In 2022 alone, more than **8,600 people were killed while walking and bicycling**¹ on U.S. roadways, the highest number since 1981.
- People walking and bicycling killed in crashes with motor vehicles account for more than 20 percent of roadway fatalities
- Since the 1950s, the Federal government has claimed its role in protecting the public's well-being through addressing roadway safety by reducing traffic crashes and fatalities²
- The annual economic cost of traffic crashes is over \$340 billion in human capital, medical care, lost productivity, litigation, insurance, property damage, and more
- All road users, including drivers, motorcyclists, and truckers benefit when road designs reduce unpredictable interactions and improve visibility

A Smart, Fiscally Responsible Fix

This legislation is not about promoting walking or bicycling over other modes of travel—it's about strengthening our national commitment to safer roads. By investing in proven, cost-effective safety improvements, we uphold the federal government's duty to protect all Americans, support economic growth, and reduce the financial and human costs of traffic accidents.

Add your name

To co-sponsor the Sarah Debbink Langenkamp Active Transportation Safety Act:

- **In the House**, contact Joe Tesfaye (Representative Raskin) at joe.tesfaye@mail.house.gov
- **In the Senate**, contact Deb Haynie (Senator Van Hollen) Deborah_Haynie@vanhollen.senate.gov



¹ (*National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. (2024, April 1). Fatality and Injury Reporting System Tool (FIRST): 2013-2021 Final File and 2022 Annual Report File (ARF). Version 5.5. Retrieved April 3, 2024, from <https://cdan.dot.gov/query>).

² <https://highways.dot.gov/highway-history/general-highway-history/president-dwight-d-eisenhower-and-federal-role-highway-5>

