

To sign on to this letter, please contact Margo Pedroso at margo@saferoutespartnership.org no later than Thursday, April 21, 2011 with the name of your organization as it should appear on the letter. National groups only, please

April 22, 2011

Dear (Member of Congress),

We, the undersigned organizations, ask you to support continuation of the federal Safe Routes to School program by co-sponsoring H.R. XXXX / S. XXXX, the Safe Routes to School Program Reauthorization Act.

Created as part of the SAFETEA-LU transportation bill in 2005, the federal Safe Routes to School program provides schools and communities with funding to retrofit roads with sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks and pathways to allow children to more safely walk and bicycle to and from school. A smaller percentage of funding also supports walking and bicycling safety education, driver awareness campaigns, and more robust traffic enforcement around schools.

The Safe Routes to School program is a proven strategy for getting more children to walk and bicycle to and from school, and provides an important tool in efforts to improve safety and address the daunting problems of physical inactivity, obesity, and poor air quality. For a small investment, many benefits result, including:

- The federal Safe Routes to School program is making critical infrastructure improvements such as sidewalks, pathways, and street crossings to make it safer for kids to walk and bike.
- For just 0.2% of the federal transportation funding, Safe Routes to School is helping to improve safety around more than 10,000 schools nationwide—critical since one-third of children's traffic deaths occur when kids are walking and biking and are struck by cars.
- Safe Routes to School is a smart use of dollars—making a one-time, low-cost investment like adding sidewalks can reduce long-term school busing costs.
- Approximately 15-25% of morning traffic is parents driving their kids to school—Safe Routes to School can help ease the morning commute for everyone.
- Communities of all shapes and sizes—rural, suburban and urban—are competing for these dollars. In some small towns Safe Routes to School funding has put in the town's first set of sidewalks which helps support access to local businesses too.
- Besides these economic benefits, these small grants are also helping kids get more physical activity and improving air quality around schools.

The Safe Routes to School program is due for reauthorization as part of the next transportation bill. H.R. XXXX / S. XXXX would sustain and strengthen the program in several ways:

- Maintain funding at the current level of \$183 million per year for five additional years to meet the high demand and need for the program;
- Expand eligibility to allow high schools to join with middle or elementary schools to apply, and to allow a state to spend a portion of its funds to address bus stop safety;
- Improve project delivery and reduce overhead by addressing regulatory burdens; and
- Add a research and evaluation component.

With your support, we can strengthen and sustain the Safe Routes to School program in the next transportation bill. We hope you will agree to co-sponsor this important legislation.

Sincerely,