

Honorable members of the committee:

My name is Jacob Johnson. I'm a math teacher at Mayo High School in Rochester Minnesota. I also actively participate in the student-lead walking group.

Mayo High School is flanked by high speed roadways on two sides: To the north, Highway 14 aka 12th St SE with a 40 mph posted speed. To the west, 11th Ave SE with a 35 mph posted speed. Both are designed for cars to comfortably travel far above these posted limits and this is something I witness every day.

Three times a week, every week I join a group of my students going for walks. Sometimes we pick up trash, sometimes we try to identify birds - most of the time we talk about life: how school is going, what the realities of their home life looks like, what they hope to do after high school. These are really good kids - leaders among their peers, supporting their peers. I want to mention that this walking group was started by them after they heard about a school staff wellness initiative. They started this group because they value our community and appreciate the outdoors. When provided with the option of walking around the halls of Mayo High School, they push back. Even on bitterly cold days with single digit temps they insist on having us all walk outside. I have no doubt that many of them would not only be walking or biking to school but actively encouraging friends to do so as well... if they felt that was safe to do so. But our school is blocked by two high speed roads with limited marked crossings and 2-3 months out of the year these roads are dark at the start and end of every school day.

We need to surround our schools with safety. National road safety leaders and our state's own Toward Zero Deaths initiative know that at even 20mph a car hitting someone will result in almost a 10% chance of pedestrian fatality. Jump up to 40 mph and that chance is very nearly a 50/50 chance of survival. Over the past 15 years, the number one cause of death for kids has been traffic fatalities. We can't easily make everywhere safe for kids, but surely if there is one place to try - it is in our school zones.

It is because of this that I am asking you to support [HF 3858 OR SF 3993] to create a path towards safe street design around our schools. Thank you.