

June 29, 2020

To all Members of Congress:

On behalf of the 35 undersigned national organizations, we urge you to vote in favor of the INVEST in America Act, which is part of H.R. 2. This important piece of legislation will help make our transportation safe and accessible for people bicycling, walking, rolling, and taking transit. Providing more affordable transportation options improves public health and reduces congestion and air pollution in our communities.

Biking, walking, and rolling are important ways to address sedentary behavior and lack of physical activity. Physical activity is one of the most important things a person can do to help curb obesity and weight gain, lower chances of developing or worsening chronic conditions, and improve well-being. Physical activity has shown a positive impact on physical and mental health, quality of life, productivity, military readiness and retention, academic performance and sleep quality. Active transportation – while practicing physical distancing – can create economic revitalization in communities and is essential for improving wellness, providing recreation, reducing social isolation, and restoring mental health-- particularly important given what we've learned during COVID-19. Even small increases in activity make a difference.

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

The INVEST Act includes critical improvements to the TAP program, which is the largest source of federal funding for walking, biking, and rolling—otherwise known as active transportation. It provides important funding to local governments to build sidewalks, bike lanes, trails, and crosswalks. The INVEST Act would:

- Increase funding and ensure more funding is available directly to local governments;
- Allow states to spend a small amount of TAP funding on technical assistance for local governments, plus flexibility to help under-resourced communities meet the local match; and
- Increase local control by extending obligation authority to large metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and giving small MPOs the ability to apply for funding.

Safety for People Biking, Walking and Rolling

Ensuring the safety of people using transportation is of the utmost importance. We know that concerns about safety are the main reasons why people who want to bike and walk more do not. Unfortunately, fatalities and serious injuries during active transport have increased to their highest levels since 1990. Fatalities for people biking and walking now make up more than 19 percent of all traffic fatalities, and more than 100,000 people are injured every year while walking and biking. This legislation prioritizes investments and policy that would protect people and prevent needless deaths. Specifically, the INVEST Act would:

- Require a national-wide Road Safety Audit to identify dangerous intersections, corridors, and other road hazards for bicyclists and pedestrians;
- Require states and large MPOs that have above-average levels of vulnerable user deaths and injuries to assess the safety risks and implement projects to improve safety;
- Include a more comprehensive list of biking and walking safety improvements, including Safe Routes to School initiatives and Vision Zero plans, to the list of eligible uses of Highway Safety Improvement Program funding, and allows them to be built without matching funds; and

- Incorporate stronger support for states and localities to incorporate Complete Streets principles into their infrastructure projects, ensuring that the safety of all users is considered.

Other Notable Provisions

We also wanted to call out a few other provisions that will improve our transportation system for all users. The INVEST Act would:

- Require a study on safe interactions between automated vehicles and road users;
- Create a performance measure to assess how well our transportation system connects people from where they live to jobs and services; and
- Include a one-year grant program to support the building of active transportation networks and connections between communities.

Our organizations encourage you to vote in favor of H.R. 2 when it comes to the floor, as these initiatives and programs will help states and communities create safer, more accessible, and economically vibrant streets and communities. If you have any questions, please contact: Caron Whitaker, League of American Bicyclists at caron@bikeleague.org; Margo Pedrosa, Safe Routes Partnership at margo@saferoutespartnership.org; or Kristy Anderson, American Heart Association at kristy.anderson@heart.org.

Sincerely,

America Walks
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American College of Lifestyle Medicine
American College of Sports Medicine
American Heart Association
American Planning Association
American Public Health Association
American Society of Landscape Architects
Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals
Association of State Public Health Nutritionists
Center for Science in the Public Interest
Choose Outdoors
Lakeshore Foundation
League of American Bicyclists
Medical Fitness Association
Move United
National Association for Health and Fitness
National Association of Chronic Disease Directors
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Fitness Foundation
National Park Trust
National Recreation and Park Association
NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation
PeopleForBikes
Physical Activity Alliance
Pinnacle Prevention
Safe Kids Worldwide

Safe Routes Partnership
Safe States Alliance
Sierra Club
Society of State Leaders of Health and Physical Education
The Anxiety and Depression Initiative, Inc.
Transportation for America
Trust for America's Health
YMCA of the USA