

SAMPLE LANGUAGE FOR HB154 Letter to Ohio Senate Rep.

I am writing to ask for your support in passing HB 154 (3-foot passing). There are numerous reasons to support this common sense legislation that will help protect the tens of thousands of people who ride bicycles in Ohio.

1) It clarifies the existing law (ORC 4511.27) that mandates passing at a “safe distance” by explicitly defining 3 feet as the minimum “safe” distance. Many motorists are simply unaware or unsure of the space requirements people on bikes need to operate safely, and this law will help them understand what is expected of them rather than relying on an ambiguous definition that lacks consistency.

2) It creates an enforceable guideline for law enforcement to better protect people from dangerous drivers. In 2013, Austin, TX conducted an operation that resulted in 104 citations for people in cars passing dangerously close to people on bikes. They followed up with a PSA to help educate motorists on safe passing techniques and demonstrate how dangerous passing too closely is. Naples, FL have enacted similar provisions, while police in Chattanooga, TN have taken it a step further by investing in equipment to directly measure passing distances. Such equipment costs \$1,400 a unit and is no different than departments investing in equipment to improve public safety. Even one life saved is worth much more than \$1,400.

3) Dangerous drivers can be held accountable for their actions. No longer will unsafe drivers be able to shift blame to the victim by arguing they initiated a “safe” (and thus legal) pass that went awry because of something the cyclist did. It creates criminal and civil protection for victims of dangerous or aggressive driving.

4) Unexpected surface hazards such as pot holes, surface debris, drain grates, or other obstacles exist that require people on bikes to deviate their line to avoid or negotiate. Mandating that drivers must provide additional clearance to bikers so they can safely execute this maneuver will protect cyclists and save lives.

5) This law will not impede traffic, as it is already permissible under the Ohio Revised Code for motorists to cross the solid yellow line to pass slow moving vehicles (ORC 4511.31). Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati and Toledo have already adopted three foot passing laws, and Ohio would join 26 other states who have already enacted similar provisions. Creating a uniform state law will protect motorists from inadvertently breaking the law as they travel between jurisdictions.

6) Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS) data shows that ~ 8,000 bicyclists were injured in accidents during the past 5 years. #HB154 will help secure at least [3feet](#) when a motor vehicle passes a bicycle, and help make Ohio roads safer