

My name is Jared Katz, I am a licensed clinical mental health counselor, and formerly a police officer for the Town of Colchester. During my time as a patrol officer, I became certified as an instructor, and later, as a master instructor by the Law Enforcement Bicycle Association (LEBA). I taught Policing By Mountain Bike to hundreds of officers in the US and Canada until 2007. In the mid twenty teens I taught the new Vulnerable Users law to academy classes at the Vermont Police Academy with Jason Van Driesche. I am an avid cyclist, a cycling advocate, and co-director of the Jackalope Northeast Cycling team based here in Montpelier, as well as a member of the Green Mountain Bicycle Club (GMBC).

I support the proposed amendments presented in H.685, and will limit my comments to the bill as it applies to cyclists.

Education will be the most important part of implementing these statutes. A survey (conducted by this writer using the GMBC listserv) of Vermont cyclists revealed that less than 40% are aware of the statutory *recommended* distance for passing a vulnerable user. The amendment to 23 V.S.A. § 1033 (b) is important because codifying an adequate distance of four feet, which most individuals operating motor vehicles (motorists) will be able to estimate, will help ensure safer passage of vulnerable users. Dissemination and education will be paramount.

The changes to 23 V.S.A. § 1139 (c )(1) (and its subsections), bring a commonsense resolution to a hazardous problem presented by the statute prior to amendment. It is important to move cyclists through intersections as safely and efficiently as possible to reduce the time they might be in conflict with motor vehicles moving through intersections. To that end, allowing cyclists to slow, rather than stop (except as noted in the amendments contained in H.685), will encourage the smooth flow of

traffic by reducing the time a cyclist must (typically) unclip from pedals and leave the saddle to stand astride or partially astride the bicycle, and then regain the saddle and the pedal or pedals while proceeding. Though we teach cyclist to regain their pedals after they have passed through an intersection, many (particularly novice or infrequent cyclists) will fumble with their pedals through an intersection which distracts from attending to safe passage through the intersection.

The changes in § 1139 (c)(2) codifies a commonsense efficiency measure by allowing cyclists to move through pedestrian crosswalks already governed by traffic control signals. This allows cyclists to move through such intersections with the same protections as pedestrians, without otherwise altering the signals for the specific purpose of cyclist. This provision is also important as it establishes the need for cyclists to yield right of way to pedestrians in the crosswalk.

It is in the inherent interest of both motorists and cyclists operating on roadways laned for traffic, to move in their respective ways with the least inconvenience to either. It is a common lament among motorists that they get stuck behind a cyclist or cyclists, often at intersections, blind rises in the roadway, or corners. It is a common lament among cyclists that motorists are generally willing to wait long moments behind a school bus, silage trailer, or, so called, honey-wagon, but they are frustrated to the point of reckless operation when waiting behind a cyclist for what is often fewer than five seconds. In five seconds, it is likely that safe passing will be available to the motorist. Because there is no way to legislate patience, it is imperative that we legislate what behaviors we can so that our roadways are as safe as we can reasonably make them. This bill, as amended, will serve to move us in the direction of safer usage of Vermont's roadways for vulnerable users and motorists, alike.