



February 16, 2022

The Hon. Doug Ford  
Premier of Ontario  
Legislative Building  
Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

VIA EMAIL: [doug.fordco@pc.ola.org](mailto:doug.fordco@pc.ola.org)

The Hon. Caroline Mulroney  
Minister of Transportation  
777 Bay Street, 5th floor  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 1Z8

VIA EMAIL: [caroline.mulroney@pc.ola.org](mailto:caroline.mulroney@pc.ola.org)

Dear Premier Ford and Minister Mulroney,

I am writing to ask for your support of [Bill 54, Protecting Vulnerable Roads Users Act](#). The objective of this bill is to protect all forms of road users by amending the *Highway Traffic Act* (HTA) to include added meaningful penalties where a vulnerable road user has been seriously injured or killed. Presently, Bill 54 has passed second reading and has been referred to Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

I am a member of the steering committee of Walk Toronto, a grassroots pedestrian advocacy group that works with various levels of government, community groups and citizens to improve walking conditions and safety in Toronto. Our group represents people of all ages and abilities. I am totally blind, and there is a limit to what I can do to stay safe while crossing the street – my safety, and the safety of others,

greatly depends on drivers following the rules and paying attention to vulnerable road users, including children, seniors, and people with disabilities.

Vulnerable road users (VRU) are people using the road outside of a car in the context of their own mobility, including walking, riding a bike, and using a mobility device. Too many vulnerable road users continue to be killed and seriously injured every year on Ontario's roads. This continued toll is unacceptable, and we must do everything possible to save Ontario residents from being senselessly killed and injured on our roads.

The proposed VRU law would include mandatory added penalties that would apply to all HTA violations where an at-fault driver has seriously injured or killed a VRU. This legislation is an essential component in deterring lethal driving behaviour, correcting bad driving habits, and providing real justice to those who are harmed. It would make a big difference in improving a sense of safety for anyone outside a car, and curbing senseless deaths and suffering.

It is essential that drivers are held accountable if they seriously hurt or kill a vulnerable road user: everyone has the right to get around safely, but the current system puts those outside cars at a disadvantage, and the lack of real consequences for those who cause serious harm or death to vulnerable road users is disproportional to the serious harm caused by the actions of the driver.

Families and victims deserve justice and closure, and convicted drivers should be accountable –breaking the law and seriously injuring a VRU or taking a life should have real consequences. The proposed legislation would add penalties for at-fault drivers who injure or kill, regardless of which Highway Traffic Act charge the driver is convicted under. If a driver strikes, seriously injures, or kills a vulnerable road user and is convicted, the driver would face license suspension and would be compelled to complete a remedial driving training course. In addition, the driver would be required to complete community service related to road safety, and their license would be suspended until they complete the retraining course and community service. The driver would also be required to appear in traffic court to hear the victim impact statement, which too often are read to an empty chair when the offending driver doesn't show up.

Walk Toronto strongly supports the proposed legislation, which would put Ontario at the forefront of accountability and protection when it comes to curbing bad and distracted driving. If the legislation is adopted, this would be the most comprehensive VRU law in North America. On behalf of Walk Toronto, I strongly encourage you to pass Bill 54, *Protecting Vulnerable Road User's Act*. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Daniella Levy-Pinto

Member of the Steering Committee, Walk Toronto