

Hello my name is Nicole Brunet and I'm the Program Director for 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania.

10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania promotes responsible land use, attainable housing, and efficient transportation systems through the lens of smart growth and resilience. We bring citizens, service providers, and subject matter experts from the public and private sectors together with policymakers to identify barriers and find common sense solutions to complex issues that strengthen our economy, protect our resources, save money, and build healthy and walkable communities for all.

Thank you to Chairman Argall and members of the committee for calling a hearing on aggressive driving in the commonwealth.

Across the commonwealth, fatal and serious crashes have severely increased after 2020 with a majority caused by drivers speeding. In the past 6 years, the number of vulnerable road users, or people outside of vehicles, killed in traffic crashes has increased. Though this is not just a Philadelphia issue, the Southeast experiences the highest rate of fatal car crashes followed by Pittsburgh, Harrisburg metro, the Lehigh Valley, and Erie.

Despite Philadelphia being nationally recognized as the most walkable city in the country, a greater percentage of people are killed in traffic crashes per capita here than compared to other major metropolitan cities like Los Angeles, Washington, DC, Chicago, and New York.

In the last two years, fatal crashes have started to decrease. When considering the number policy and infrastructure solutions enacted in that time, there has never been more of an urgency to continue investing in high quality infrastructure and proven enforcement systems.

Traffic deaths are unacceptable, avoidable, and policy failures. Policies exist that have been proven to save lives like automated speed and red light enforcement, investments in infrastructure like bike lanes and other traffic calming measures, and updates to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices or MUTCD. The legislature has a role to play in eliminating traffic fatalities by passing and expanding existing policies that focus on changing drivers behavior, slowing people down, and investing in communities.

As smart growth and land use advocates, 10,000 Friends of PA focuses on our efforts on building communities that thrive through affordable housing, safe roads, and responsible land use. When talking about the need to build more housing in denser areas, we are often met with concerns that roads aren't safe enough to walk down the street or to the bus stop.

I have seen first hand the impacts that aggressive driving has on a way of life through my work with groups like Families for Safe Streets. But the reality is, everyone has a story about experiencing someone speeding, changing lanes erratically, or even getting hit. Since the invention of the car, planners have continued to build out streets to encourage speeding and getting people from point A to point B most "efficiently." It's because of this, we now have multilane highways running through neighborhoods, cutting people off from community, jobs,

transit, and economic centers. This is why we say that traffic crashes are not accidents, there were decisions made by planners, state and federal DOTs, and individuals to create the current environment that encourages aggressive driving.

It's a myth that slowing down drivers and reducing the size of roadways negatively impacts traffic patterns. There are many studies, including a 2019 study called "[Can We Build Our Way Out of Congestion](#)" by Albert Krol, that show adding more lanes actually creates more traffic by causing more conflict points and increasing the demand of drivers. Highway widening is incredibly expensive and may get more people on the road but doesn't actually move people more efficiently.

It doesn't have to be like this. By using the safe systems approach, local and state planners can pass policies that target slowing down drivers, reducing conflict zones between drivers and vulnerable road users, all while revitalizing downtown areas.

Impact proven policy solutions: ([Safe Systems Approach](#): balancing infrastructure, enforcement and education)

- Rebalancing transportation funding to support active transportation projects in dense areas instead of widening highways
- Getting rid of the 85th percentile and implementing the updated MUTCD that includes safety measures like parking protected bike lanes
- Expanding Automated Speed and Red Light Camera enforcement
- Focusing funding on fix it first projects, allocating funds to maintaining existing roadways
- Adequately funding public transportation across the commonwealth to not only meet the current ridership needs but increase it
- Enforcing illegal license plate obscuring devices made to evade speed and red light enforcement programs
- Enforcing illegal window tinting which make it impossible for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other drivers to communicate at conflict points
- Updating zoning and permitting to allow for more development in existing downtown areas
- Lower speed limits in dense areas
- Stop super speeders by using Intelligent Speed Assistance devices
- Add questions on the drivers test focusing on how to drive safely when sharing the road with vulnerable users
- Create returning education for adult and senior drivers