

Fact Sheet

Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

H.3539 An Act to Establish a Safe Routes to School Program

The problem: Relatively few children walk or bike to school

- Walking or biking to school is sometimes viewed as unsafe.
- Facilities for walking/biking are often missing or in need of upgrading.
- Administrative or institutional support for walking/biking to school is weak.

Need for legislation in Massachusetts

Limited federal money for Safe Routes to Schools is provided under the SRTS portion of current federal transportation funding programs (SAFETEA-LU). In order to create a robust SRTS program, Massachusetts must use a portion of the SAFETEA-LU highway safety budget for the SRTS programs and capital improvements.

Bill summary

The bill requires the Executive Office of Transportation to use a portion of the state's Strategic Highway Safety funds for SRTS programs and infrastructure. Projects may include:

- Safety education programs.
- Construction of wide outside lanes for bike routes.
- Construction of multi-use trails.
- Construction and replacement of sidewalks.
- Implementation of traffic-calming programs in neighborhoods around schools.
- Installation of new crosswalks, bike lanes and signage.

Project awards are to be based on consideration of:

- Applicant's demonstrated needs.
- Potential to reduce injuries and fatalities.
- Potential to encourage walking and bicycling.
- Identification of safety hazards.
- Identification of current and potential walking routes to schools.
- Local support.

Other states

In 1999 California became the first state to pass a Safe Routes to School bill, directing one-third of California's federal safety set-aside funding to Safe Routes to School – a total of about \$22 million/year. More than \$130 million in qualified grant applications have been received every year since the program began.