

Testimony to the House Committee on Municipal Government & Housing Regarding
House Bill No. 8012 – Rhode Island Pedestrian Safety Act
Seth Webb, March 24, 2026

Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on House Bill No. 8012, the Rhode Island Pedestrian Safety Act. I am a former Town Manager, representing a traffic safety technology company, here to speak in strong support of this legislation.

Opening: This Is About Safety

- This bill is about preventing injuries and saving lives – not about generating tickets or revenue. It addresses one of the most dangerous and under-enforced issues on our roads: driver behavior around pedestrians (think virtual crossing guards).
- It would give RI Municipalities the option to adopt a new technology which demonstrated a 70% reduction in traffic violations in Maryland.
- This is the same legislation that quickly passed in Maryland and Virginia, and was recently introduced in Pennsylvania.

1. Pedestrian Safety We’re Not Addressing Today - In Rhode Island, an observational traffic study conducted in February across 23 locations showed alarming behavior:

- 3 out of 5 pedestrians are not yielded to at crosswalks
- Stop sign violations occur at extremely high rates — over 75%.

These are leading causes of pedestrian injuries and fatalities, especially for children. Today, most of this behavior goes unenforced.

2. Give Municipalities a New Tool (not a mandate) to Protect People on Foot -

This is not a general traffic camera approach like you’ve seen before — it is purpose-built for pedestrian safety. It focuses on:

- Failure to yield at crosswalks
- Failure to stop at stop signs

And it is deployed in areas where children, seniors, and people with disabilities are most at risk: School zones and Hospital zones.

Importantly, this legislation gives municipalities an option — not a mandate.

- No city or town is required to adopt this approach. Local leaders remain fully in control of whether, where, and how this is used based on their community's needs.
- And it comes at no cost to the municipality — removing one of the biggest barriers to improving safety.
- There is no upfront investment, no need to hire new staff, and no major infrastructure required.
- That means communities can make decisions based on protecting pedestrians, not constrained by limited budgets.

3. A Prevention Tool - The goal is behavior change, not ticket volume. It focused on pedestrian interactions in high risk areas. It demonstrated a 70% reduction in traffic violations in Maryland. Drivers are:

- Notified of violations
- Given access to the footage
- Reviewed through a human due-process system
- Tickets are determined by law enforcement

4. Built With Privacy and Fairness From the Start - This is a safety system with strong privacy protections.

- Faces are blurred on-device — identities are not captured.
- Data not used for ticketing is deleted within 24 hours.
- Every citation includes human review.

5. Immediate Safety Impact - Infrastructure improvements for pedestrian safety take years and significant investment. This approach can be deployed immediately in high-risk areas, helping advance Rhode Island's Vision Zero goals.

Closing

This legislation is a practical, immediate step to improve pedestrian safety and prevent avoidable injuries and deaths.