[DATE]

Dear Senate Judiciary Committee:

ORGANIZATION NAME is pleased to support the bicycle safety package before this committee. I strongly urge you to vote in favor of **SB 123, 170, and 124**. These bills create clear standards for how to safely pass a bicyclist and will improve driver’s education in Michigan to put a greater emphasis on bicycle safety. Additionally, I would like to express my support for **SB 580 and 581** strengthening distracted driving penalties in Michigan.

[Personalize – about your club, business, local anecdote, connection to issue(s), dangerous interaction with a motorist, etc.]

*Recommended talking points (Please choose the points that mean the most to you and your community. Again,* ***please put into your own words****):*

* *Michigan lags behind other states in protecting bicyclists, pedestrians, and wheelchair users. Bicycle crashes and fatalities continue to rise at an alarming rate. The Office of Highway Safety Planning reports 38 bicyclists were killed in 2016 in Michigan, up a terrifying 81% from 2014. Additionally, 1,959 bicyclists were involved in motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2016. These bills will help prevent future senseless tragedies.*
* *Popular Complete Streets policies mean more and more bicycle lanes and other dedicated bicycle infrastructure are being installed in communities across Michigan. Failing to include how to navigate this new infrastructure and to address bicycle safety in driver’s education endangers the lives of all roadway users. Dedicating a specific amount of time will help to alleviate confusion among motorists and reduce common crashes.*
* *The Office of Highway Safety and Planning reports that 55% of bicyclists involved in crashes in 2015 were “going straight ahead” prior to the crash.*
* *A five-feet passing standard is the minimum distance sufficient to ensure safe passing and to help prevent a driver from striking a cyclist.*
* *Michigan is one of only eleven states without a law specifically requiring motorists to pass bicyclists safely.*
* *Cities all over Michigan are outpacing the State Legislature in protecting their local bicyclists. Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Ann Arbor, Portage, Oshtemo Township, and Norton Shores have all adopted five-foot passing ordinances. Battle Creek has a similar policy and Dearborn will likely soon adopt a five-foot ordinance as well. Numerous other policies are pending in other communities. A uniform statewide standard will alleviate confusion over a growing patchwork of policies.*
* *The Michigan Department of Transportation and Department of State published a joint PSA urging drivers to pass cyclists with five feet of space. It is time to codify this into state law!*
* *Grand Rapids’ recent “Driving Change” campaign featured their five-foot safe passing ordinance as a basis for educating drivers in how to safely interact with bicyclists with great success. The effort resulted in an 82% reduction in fatal or serious injuries from bicycle-involved crashes.*

ORGANIZATION NAME is very encouraged at the extensive public support for these bills and the wide bipartisan support among the legislature. Thank you in advance for your leadership in supporting these common sense bills.

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME
POSITION

**FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Please put your personalized letter your letterhead and include personalize as much as possible.
2. Please email to the Senate Judiciary Clerk (OfcSMCC@senate.michigan.gov) and request that it be submitted as testimony for the hearing on September 27th. Please be sure to CC: aneta@LMB.org so LMB can track the support for our bills.
3. The members of this committee voted unanimously in favor of last year’s versions of our bills. We are optimistic that we will see the same action at this hearing. LMB is coordinating with the bill sponsor, Senator O’Brien, to arrange testimony during the hearing. She is requesting to limit testimony and keep remarks “short and sweet” since we believe the committee is supportive of the bills. For this reason, a letter of support is the best way to express your support to committee members. This will help expedite the committee’s vote. If you are interested in speaking at the hearing, please contact LMB (john@LMB.org) directly to make arrangements. If you are able to attend the hearing, we encourage you to fill out a card in support of the bills.