



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

House of Representatives

State House, Boston 02113-1054

Contact: Cory Azmon  
[Cory.Azmon@mahouse.gov](mailto:Cory.Azmon@mahouse.gov)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 28, 2019

**Representative Santiago Testifies Before the Committee on Transportation**  
*Join Committee on Transportation hears testimony relative to pedestrian safety bills*

BOSTON – On Thursday, March 27th, Representative Jon Santiago testified in support of H.3118, An Act to reduce traffic fatalities, and H.3179, An Act requiring the hands-free use of mobile telephones while driving.

In his testimony, Representative Santiago reflected on his experience as an emergency room physician. “And no time is the anxiety and nervousness more heightened than when I get a call about a pedestrian or cyclist that has been hit by a vehicle, and that’s precisely because of the multisystem trauma experienced when a person is hit by a moving vehicle,” said Rep. Santiago. “I don’t want to tell another person, like the elderly man I took care of recently, that he’s paralyzed from the neck down because of a distracted driver.”

“These injuries and deaths were preventable and and future ones can be preventable so long as we’re willing to pass common sense laws protecting pedestrians and cyclists. As a physician, advocating for stricter regulations to protect the public health is my responsibility and duty to patients,” said Representative Santiago.

“I was very impressed with all the people who showed up to testify in favor of stronger traffic safety laws,” said Emily Stein, President of the Safe Road Alliance and nurse. “I am grateful to all the legislators who testified in favor of these traffic safety bills today, as well as the 107 legislators who co-sponsored one of the hands-free bills so early in the session. We are all very hopeful that hands-free will pass this year. The time is now.”

The two bills are aimed at increasing pedestrian safety. H.3118, An Act to reduce traffic fatalities, aims to guarantee safety to all traffic participants. The bill defines pedestrians, emergency and roadside workers, cyclists, people using wheelchairs, scooters, skateboards as “vulnerable users” and sets a safe passing distance of vulnerable road users of at least three feet. It will also develop a standardized analysis tool which will be used to report crashes and incidents involving pedestrians and cyclists while equipping all state and state-contracted trucks with safety side-guards and additional mirrors to minimize blind spots and reduce fatalities of people walking and biking. H.3179, An Act requiring the hands-free use of mobile telephones while driving, bans the use of hand-held electronic mobile devices while driving to decrease driver distraction. The bill would also authorize police officers to stop drivers and issue citations for using hand-held mobile electronic devices.

###