



NEWS RELEASE
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LB 716 passes to Select File, Amendments filed by senators Coash and Bloomfield

Nebraska came one step closer to becoming more bicycle friendly on April 4. LB 716, sponsored by Senator Rick Kolowski of Omaha, passed from General File to Select File with a vote of 26-5. Eleven senators were present, not voting. The bill clarifies the right of way law with regards to bicyclists and repeals the outdated mandatory side path provision currently in the law.

The Nebraska Bicycling Alliance has been monitoring this bill closely and testified in favor at the committee hearing in January. Executive Director Julie Harris noted that many of the questions raised during the debate were around issues that are not impacted by the bill. "The right of way provision in LB 716 has a very narrow scope. It only applies to where designated trails cross streets. It does not apply to sidewalks or regular intersections, although that seemed to be the topic where most of the time was spent on discussion."

On Tuesday, Senator Colby Coash of Lincoln filed an amendment that would strike language from the bill that repeals the mandatory side path provision. Senator Dave Bloomfield of Hoskins filed an additional amendment that would require anyone younger than sixteen to dismount and walk his or her bicycle when crossing a street.

Harris said that the amendments were filed without consulting bicyclists, and it is unclear if law enforcement or the Nebraska Department of Roads were contacted. "It is disappointing that a state senator would impulsively propose changes to the rules of the road without consulting the people that it most directly impacts. This would never happen with laws aimed at vehicle drivers," said Harris. "Senator Coash's amendment would force people on bikes to ride in conditions that may not be safe and Senator Bloomfield's amendment would discourage kids from biking."

"In a time when childhood obesity is skyrocketing, the last thing we should be doing is making it harder for kids to bike to school or around their neighborhood," Harris said.

About the Nebraska Bicycling Alliance:

The Nebraska Bicycling Alliance is a nonprofit organization. Its mission is to cultivate a safer, more bicycle friendly Nebraska through partnerships, education and advocacy.