

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 1821

A RESOLUTION supporting visually impaired pedestrian safety.

WHEREAS, Technological advances in motor vehicles have led to the increased popularity of alternative fuel motorized road vehicles, such as hybrid and electric vehicles and to quiet roadway and tire technologies; and

WHEREAS, These new technologies are changing the way pedestrians, especially the blind and visually impaired, utilize audible cues to cross streets and move through traffic because the engines in these vehicles operate with significantly less sound than the traditional combustion engine, resulting in a reduction of the warning time that blind or visually impaired pedestrians have to get across an intersection; and

WHEREAS, When vision, as a means of understanding and interpreting the environment, is reduced or completely eliminated, hearing takes over as the main information channel. Those who are blind or visually impaired have learned to rely on hearing to judge when it is safe to cross the street. Hearing also helps them verify they are within a crosswalk following a straight pathway and not veering into hazardous vehicular areas; and

WHEREAS, Traffic noise is a primary source of auditory information because the sounds of traffic give the blind or visually impaired pedestrians information about location, direction and flow which enables them to determine when they can safely cross a street; and

WHEREAS, Such sounds allow blind or visually impaired pedestrians to determine the geometric shape of an intersection and the presence of approaching vehicles. When there is silence, it is interpreted as a safe time to cross an intersection; and

WHEREAS, These environmentally friendly vehicles are extremely difficult and often impossible to hear for the blind or visually impaired. This is a threat to the ability of the blind or visually impaired pedestrians to move with independence and safety: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved by the Senate of the State of Kansas:* That the Senate of the State of Kansas appeals to the Federal Department of Transportation, the Congress of the United States of America and the Kansas Congressional Delegation to protect visually impaired pedestrians by researching and identifying strategies to ensure that all motor vehicles, regardless of engine type or configuration, emit sound sufficient to be heard and located by pedestrians, including those who are blind or visually impaired.

*Be it further resolved:* That the Secretary of the Senate be directed to send enrolled copies of this resolution to the Federal Department of Transportation and the Kansas Congressional Delegation.

Senate Resolution No. 1821 was sponsored by Committee on Transportation.

I hereby certify that the above RESOLUTION originated in the SENATE, and was adopted by that body

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*President of the Senate.*

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*Secretary of the Senate.*