

Fact Sheet

## **Safe Routes to School (SRTS)**

### **H.3539 An Act to Establish a Safe Routes to School Program**

#### **The problem: Relatively few children walk or bike to school**

- Walking or biking to school is sometimes viewed as unsafe.
- Facilities for walking/biking are often missing or in need of upgrading.
- Administrative or institutional support for walking/biking to school is weak.

#### **Need for legislation in Massachusetts**

Limited federal money for Safe Routes to Schools is provided under the SRTS portion of current federal transportation funding programs (SAFETEA-LU). In order to create a robust SRTS program, Massachusetts must use a portion of the SAFETEA-LU highway safety budget for the SRTS programs and capital improvements.

#### **Bill summary**

The bill requires the Executive Office of Transportation to use a portion of the state's Strategic Highway Safety funds for SRTS programs and infrastructure. Projects may include:

- Safety education programs.
- Construction of wide outside lanes for bike routes.
- Construction of multi-use trails.
- Construction and replacement of sidewalks.
- Implementation of traffic-calming programs in neighborhoods around schools.
- Installation of new crosswalks, bike lanes and signage.

Project awards are to be based on consideration of:

- Applicant's demonstrated needs.
- Potential to reduce injuries and fatalities.
- Potential to encourage walking and bicycling.
- Identification of safety hazards.
- Identification of current and potential walking routes to schools.
- Local support.

#### **Other states**

In 1999 California became the first state to pass a Safe Routes to School bill, directing one-third of California's federal safety set-aside funding to Safe Routes to School – a total of about \$22 million/year. More than \$130 million in qualified grant applications have been received every year since the program began.