

Hi Bill and Will,

Here is a testimony that Steve Lehman wrote us in regards to the Safe Passing Legislation. He is not able to drive to Helena to testify, but could someone read this at the hearing. Kathy also contact a friend of hers that lives in Helena, but not sure if she will be able to testify.

Darlene

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Steve Lehman** <slehman@crowleyfleck.com>

Date: Wed, Dec 5, 2012 at 4:23 PM

Subject: safe passing distance

To: Kathy Aragon <jenaragon@bresnan.net>, Darlene Tussing <darlene.tussing@gmail.com>

On or about June 21, 1989 at about 3 PM on a bright sunny day I was riding my bicycle on the Molt Road in Yellowstone County approaching a building that used to be known as the Echo Inn. I was riding on the approximately 18 inch shoulder between the white line and the ditch. I recall being passed by a large truck whose mirror seemed to be within inches of my head. Seconds after the truck passed I was struck by a compact car going 55 miles an hour. I tumbled down the road for 76 feet. My left leg was broken, both arms were dislocated, I had third-degree road burns on the right side and back of my body and my right arm was almost severed at the shoulder joint, causing extreme arterial bleeding. A good Samaritan witness saved my life by using pressure to slow the arterial bleeding until I was transported by ambulance to the hospital where I was in surgery for hours to reconstruct the artery, relocate my shoulders and clean the wounds. I was wearing a helmet or I would have suffered severe brain damage if not death. I spent weeks in a Hubbard tank removing dead skin from the road Burns. I spent 3 months unable to move my right arm and tried to rehabilitate it for a year but ended up with only about 25% use of my formerly dominant right-hand. 20 years later I've had to have a total right knee replacement and a total left hip replacement which I think are related to the accident 20 years ago.

The driver of the compact car that struck me claimed she had a foreign body in her contact lens and that caused her to drift onto the shoulder and strike me. I believe that because she was following the truck she never saw me up ahead even though the road was perfectly flat and straight. If the truck would have passed me at a safe distance maybe she would have seen me before she had the contact lens problem. Anything you can do to get people to pass bicycles with 4 feet or more distance will hopefully prevent the type of suffering and life-changing experience I had to go through. I'm sure it would also prevent many unnecessary deaths. If I can be of further assistance let me know.

