

**Virginia PTA Convention 2005**  
**Resolution #3**

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF**  
**MANDATORY STOPS FOR PEDESTRIANS IN CROSSWALKS**

- WHEREAS The purpose of the Virginia PTA is to promote the welfare of children in our communities and secure adequate laws for the protection of children; and
- WHEREAS The Code of Virginia Section 46.2-924 only requires a driver to "yield" the right of way to pedestrians where the speed limit is less than 35 miles per hour; and
- WHEREAS According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than one-third of our school-aged children are overweight or obese, and this condition is spreading; As a direct consequence, more children are at immediate risk of contracting diabetes and heart disease, and in the longer term they are more likely to experience a wide range of health conditions to the point of decreased life-expectancy. One of the best opportunities to address this obesity epidemic is to increase regular, routine physical activity; and
- WHEREAS As recently as 30 years ago, the majority of children in the U.S. walked or biked to school: today, fewer than 15% do. Many school systems now offer school-bus transport to nearly all of their students.; and
- WHEREAS As many as 50% of school kids are routinely driven to school by their parents. According to the National Academy of Sciences, the resulting motor vehicle traffic is itself, part of the safety problem for kids walking or biking to school; and
- WHEREAS Approximately 115 pedestrians die every year in Virginia after being hit by cars. And for every pedestrian killed by an automobile, more than 20 are injured, meaning that approximately 2,300 pedestrians are injured by automobiles each year. More than half -- 57 percent -- of all pedestrian deaths by automobile in Virginia occur on neighborhood streets ( National Highway Traffic Safety Administration annual Traffic Safety Facts reports, 1985-1996); and
- WHEREAS The three counties with the most pedestrian fatalities in Virginia are Fairfax, Norfolk City, and Virginia Beach City. The most dangerous metro areas in the state for walking are Johnson City--Kingsport--Bristol, TN--VA and Lynchburg, VA. (Environmental Working Group analysis of NHTSA reports); and
- WHEREAS Pedestrian actions, which contribute to pedestrian traffic fatalities, include not crossing the street at crosswalks, walking in an improper position on the roadway, running onto the roadway from between parked cars, and drinking. vehicle operator actions, which contribute to pedestrian fatalities, include failure to yield, obscured vision, inattentive or distracted, speeding, and drinking (Iowa Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau); and

- WHEREAS Prioritizing pedestrian traffic over motor vehicle traffic in zones dedicated to pedestrian movement (i.e. marked crosswalks) is a vital condition for safe walking and an increasing number of states are clarifying their pedestrian rights and motor vehicle laws by mandating stops at crosswalks with pedestrians including Maryland and the District of Columbia (Rutgers Transportation Policy Institute); be it therefore
- RESOLVED The Virginia PTA and constituent districts, councils and local units support legislation that requires motor vehicle traffic to stop for all pedestrians in marked crosswalks; and be it further
- RESOLVED The Virginia PTA encourages local PTAs to contact their elected representatives and urge them to sponsor and/ or support legislation that requires automobiles to stop for pedestrians in marked crosswalks; and be it further
- RESOLVED The Virginia PTA supports all efforts to ensure the safety of children and families walking and bicycling in their communities such as traffic calming measures; and be it further
- RESOLVED The Virginia PTA and constituent districts, councils and local units educate the public on pedestrian safety issues, the International Walk to School Week and the Active Living Network to promote active walking communities and healthier children.