

Hon. Benjamin V. Sanchez  
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Dear Mr. Benjamin V. Sanchez:

The law of Pennsylvania states that children aged 12 years and under must wear a helmet at all times. The issue is that some children do not wear helmets when they are still required by law. As citizens, our duty is to follow the laws of the state and country, which is what inspired our movement in our sixth grade APEX Class to take action on this cause. When wearing helmets on whichever vehicle you use, helmets are important when protecting your brain from injuries and death. Many injuries have been caused from *not* wearing helmets, along with many people who have suffered with concussions and head trauma when not wearing a helmet. Deaths of cyclists have increased over the years. According to Helmets.org, from 2017-2018, deaths from those in accidents who were not wearing helmets increased from 783 to 857, and in 2016, there were 287 more deaths. In 2015, there were exactly 300 more deaths from not wearing a helmet, vs. wearing a helmet. Although it is not realistic to require adults to wear helmets, it is at least necessary to wear one up to the age of 17. This ensures that while citizens are still minors, they are more likely to stay safe, with their brain not yet fully developed until the age of 25.

Another issue common among U.S. citizens, is not only wearing a helmet, but not having the right *fitted* helmet. This can also be a crucial issue among any citizen's safety and well being. If the helmet does not fit properly, it would entirely eliminate the purpose of wearing the helmet. This makes it a critical part of bike riding, or riding on any wheels (roller skates, rollerblades, motorbikes, bicycles, skate boards, hoverboards, ect.).

Riding as an adult over 25, as your brain is not fully developed until that age, it can still come with its risks riding on wheels without a helmet. When you are under the age of 25, your brain will be much more vulnerable to injury; however it is still critical at *all* ages to wear a helmet.

Another problem for the state of Pennsylvania is that some parents may *want* their children to be safe, but they do not have enough money to afford a helmet. If the adults cannot buy the child a helmet, then the child's injury risk is higher than it would be. If we could increment a fund-raiser for people who cannot afford a helmet, the injury risk might not be as high, or as worrisome.

The risk of traumatic brain injury when not wearing a helmet is high, and if your brain has not fully developed, the result of the injury may be even worse. Most injuries are sustained by not wearing helmets through ages 5-14. Also, the law is saying that younger kids should always wear a helmet, but because of the late developing age, more that just kids should be required to wear a helmet.

As we have established, there are many motives for wearing a helmet, as well as many examples of why the law should be extended to the age of 17 or above to reduce the risks of traumatic brain injury in the state of Pennsylvania. As U.S. citizens, we should always be looking for a way to keep our peers and fellow Americans safe.