



## California Bicycle Coalition

### **Vulnerable Road Users Protection Act - Fact Sheet** *in support of AB 2398 (Levine)*

Current law regarding traffic collisions makes no distinction between a person in a vehicle and those that have no protective shell around them. Existing law provides that drivers, who cause bodily injury to another person, are subject to a base fine ranging from only \$70 to \$95. By comparison, the base fine for littering is \$100 and the first violation for unauthorized parking in a disabled spot is \$250.

While cars are getting safer for their occupants and fatalities suffered by car occupants are declining, the reverse is true for those outside of a car. According to the most recent data by the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), pedestrian and bike deaths are increasing. 736 Californians were killed by a car while walking or biking in 2012, an 11% increase over 2010 rates.

### **How AB 2398 Helps**

This bill recognizes that people who use bikes, walk, run, ride horses, scooter, skateboard, and work on California streets face a greater danger when using California streets, and defines us as a vulnerable road user (VRU). It increases the penalties for motorists who drive recklessly and harm any vulnerable road user. It helps to make it clear that motorists should exercise extra caution in the presence of people using the streets and roads without protection of the big metal box of a car. This bill offers a greater deterrent to drivers who fail to respect others' use of the road. It is an important step in our work to create communities where everyone feels safe and comfortable riding a bike for short trips.

Specifically, this bill applies the following increased penalties to offending motorists:

- increases the fine to a minimum of \$220 and a maximum of \$1,000. With additional assessments and fees applied according to the Vehicle Code, the total ticket cost will range from a minimum of \$1,031 to a maximum of \$4,229.
- a point will be charged to the motorist's driving record.
- upon a second offense within 3 years of a prior conviction, the driver's privilege to drive is suspended for 6 months.

It is an important tool in our work to create communities where everyone feels safe and comfortable riding a bike for short trips. Similar laws have passed in other states including Oregon, Delaware, Hawaii, Vermont, and Washington.

Please support AB 2398.