

**Senate Committee on Transportation**  
**Verbal testimony: SB 800**  
**The City of Houston**

Good morning Mr. Chair and Committee Members thank you for the opportunity to speak this morning, my name is Khang Nguyen. I am the City Traffic Engineer for the City of Houston. I am testifying ON the bill, but the City of Houston has great traffic safety concerns regarding this bill. The City of Houston shares the goals of House Bill 1263 to ensure the safety of school children. The City of Houston has a well-established Schools Coordination Program that works closely with school principals to develop a traffic plan that balances pedestrian safety and roadway mobility.

We have a dedicated School Group that manages the program and regularly conducts traffic safety analyses around schools, including high schools, and recommends safety enhancements. The tools in the program include school zone (or reduced speed zone), parking restriction, bus zone, crosswalk, all-way stop-control, pedestrian signal, full traffic signal, and others. At any particular school, our School Group could recommend a combination of these tools, depending on their analysis findings and the context of the area. All the tools, except the reduced speed zone, are currently available for high schools. In light of recent safety research and our Vision Zero efforts, we do plan to update the program to include reduced speed zone for high schools.

Installation of traffic control devices must follow warrant criteria from the Texas Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices as well as other national and local standards; inappropriate implementation can defy driver expectations and could lead to unsafe driving behavior. The proposed language in House Bill 1263 focuses on school zone and school crosswalk, and the language is so broad that it will pose conflicts with the Texas Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices and the City Ordinance.

Instead of focusing on two of the tools available for school traffic safety, we would like the bill to be amended to mandate a comprehensive school safety program. The program should require traffic safety evaluation, data-driven recommendations, and close coordination with schools. The program should also require professional engineers to guide the responsible practice and implementation of safety features.

I want to close with a simple question: is an amendment amenable to all the parties involved that any request by a school district be required to be recommended and approved by a professional traffic engineer?

Thank you for your time and consideration of our request to amend House Bill 1263.