

League of American Bicyclists – Questionnaire

General Election – 2018

Daniel W. Lipinski

U.S. Congress, 3rd District, Illinois

1. The 116th Congress will start work on the next surface transportation reauthorization. What are your transportation priorities?

Although the FAST Act does not expire until October 2020, I have been pushing to make infrastructure legislation our first priority in the next Congress. As an avid cyclist, runner, and a member of the LAB, I will continue my long-time advocacy for bike-ped infrastructure and laws that facilitate an increase in bike and pedestrian transportation. Last Congress, I authored a law to make transit stations more bike-friendly.

2. The Highway Trust Fund (HTF), which funds highway and transit projects, is funded through excise taxes on transportation related goods, the largest being taxes on gas and diesel. These fuel taxes were last increase in 1993, and have not kept pace with inflation and transportation costs. Under the current FAST Act, Congress moved \$72 billion from the general fund to the HTF for five years. What are your views on the HTF and federal funding of transportation?

We must fix the HTF and the solution needs to be user-related and linked to inflation. I have fought against recent attempts to change federal transportation policy by devolving funding responsibility to the states and I oppose plans that claim that private funds can significantly replace public funding of infrastructure. Public transit and bike-ped infrastructure must also continue to be paid for out of the HTF.

3. Right now, 20 percent of Highway Trust Fund (HTF) dollars go to the transit fund, and 80 percent go to the Highways fund. One to two percent of funding is devoted to bicycling and walking, which comes out of the Highway fund. What is your position on these funding allocations?

With traffic congestion on the rise, we must redouble our commitment to policies like Complete Streets, which not only facilitate safer bike-ped transportation and take cars off the streets, but also benefit the environment and improve local air quality. As a strong proponent of public transportation, I also believe we must continue to devote at least 20% of transportation spending to public transit.

4. Last year, over 40,000 people lost their lives on our roadways. Over 16 percent of those fatalities were bicyclists and pedestrians. What role, if any, should the federal government play in roadway safety?

As an avid cyclist, runner, and walker, safety is very personal for me and I understand the need for increased attention to engineering infrastructure that prioritizes safety for cyclists and pedestrians.

The federal government must insist on a focus on Complete Streets by state & local governments. Safety must be a core component of federal investment, and we must ensure that money designated for safety isn't redistributed to other uses.

5. The Center for Disease Control reports that physical activity maintains health, reduces the risk of developing obesity, diabetes and other chronic diseases, reduces feelings of depression and may also improve academic performance. What, if any, role should the federal government have in encouraging Americans to engage in physical activities?

As a Type-1 diabetic, I understand how beneficial physical activity is for personal health. Federal policies should encourage a healthy society. Examples include supporting active transportation infrastructure, regularly updating and promoting physical activity guidelines, and reversing negative changes to the bike commuter benefit enacted in the 2017 tax law. Wellness programs, including those supported by health insurance plans, should be available to all.

6. Under the Clean Air Act, Congress requires the EPA to set National Ambient Air Quality Standards for contaminants such as carbon monoxide (CO), particulate matter (PM) and ozone (O3). Carbon dioxide (CO2) is not covered. What, if any, role should the federal government play in regulating carbon dioxide?

Although carbon dioxide is not mentioned in the text of the Clean Air Act, Congress was explicit that EPA should apply its best scientific judgment in regulating new pollutants as needed. EPA appropriately found that CO₂ endangers public health and welfare, and the Supreme Court upheld that finding, therefore EPA must regulate CO₂. In addition, Congress should act to pass laws that will decrease the release of CO₂.

7. What role do bicycling, walking, and public transit play in the transportation system in your district?

Bicycling, walking, and public transit are all important forms of transportation for me, at home and Washington. In my district, public transit is critical for many people on a daily basis and I make funding of transit a priority. I believe with the correct federal and local policies walking and bicycling can be more attractive for many. I have helped expand the Centennial and Cal-Sag Trails which I utilize.