

Statement of Opponecy for the School Zone Crosswalk Safety Act ( HB: OBU-504)

By: Alexis Horton (ORU)

Lobbyist for the Oklahoma Intercollegiate Legislature (O.I.L)

November 13, 2025

## **Overview**

Members of the Oklahoma Intercollegiate Legislature, while the intentions behind House Bill OBU-504 are commendable, this bill fails to consider the real-world costs, feasibility issues, and unintended consequences that would be placed on Oklahoma cities. Everyone here supports safer crosswalks for children and students; that is not in question. What is in question is whether this bill is the most effective, most efficient, and most responsible way to accomplish that goal.

This bill mandates repainting and signage checks within a one-mile radius of every elementary school, every secondary school, and every public university in the state. That is a sweeping and costly requirement. The heart behind this bill is good, but the structure is not. And that is why the Legislature must oppose this legislation as it is currently written.

## **Why This Bill's Good Intentions Don't Make It Good Policy**

It is easy to hear “crosswalk safety” and instinctively want to support the bill. After all, we all grew up hearing “children’s safety comes first.” But good intentions alone cannot justify state-level mandates on city budgets that are already stretched thin.

Delegates, cities in Oklahoma are not failing to repaint crosswalks because they don’t care; they’re struggling because they lack the manpower or the funds. Many rural cities only have one or two street workers responsible for maintaining every street, pothole, line, and sign in the entire town. This bill treats every city, such as Tulsa or Norman, the same. But Oklahoma is

full of small towns that barely have the staff to keep up with basic road repairs. Requiring them to repaint every school-zone crosswalk every two years and re-check signage is not just difficult; in some places, it's nearly impossible.

## **Major Concerns and Reasons for Opposition**

### 1. This bill results in an unfunded mandate

The bill requires extensive city labor, repainting materials, inspections, and potential repairs, but provides no funding mechanism or support. Cities do not have infinite budgets. When the state mandates new responsibilities without providing funding, they force cities to cut from other crucial needs, like:

- Road repairs
- Stormwater management
- Fire/EMS resources
- Park maintenance

If new responsibilities are added, new funding must follow. This bill does not provide that.

### 2. The one-mile radius requirement is excessive

A one-mile radius around a school or university covers:

- Major intersections
- Residential neighborhoods

- Commercial districts
- Areas not actually used by students

This means cities will be repainting crosswalks that:

- Students do not use
- Serve no safety purpose
- Cost money without improving safety

Crosswalk improvements should be targeted, not blanket-mandated.

### 3. Cities need flexibility, not rigid two-year mandates

Every city is different. Some crosswalks fade quickly due to traffic patterns. Others last four or six years without needing repainting. Local governments, the ones who actually maintain the streets, should have the flexibility to decide repainting schedules, not a statewide requirement telling them how often they must repaint every single crosswalk.

### 4. **This bill adds unnecessary administrative burden**

Requiring signage checks on every crosswalk within one mile of every school sounds simple on paper. In practice, it is hours of manpower spent inspecting:

- Signs that are perfectly fine
- Signs nowhere near student foot traffic
- Signs are already regularly checked by city ordinances

Cities already inspect damaged or vandalized signage. This requirement adds repetitive work with little to no meaningful benefit.

### **Pros But Not Enough to Justify the Bill**

No one is against safer crossings. No one opposes protecting students. But safety improvements must be implemented responsibly.

Do we want safe crosswalks? Absolutely.

Do crosswalks sometimes need repainting? Yes.

Should signage be checked occasionally? Of course.

But this bill does not distinguish between necessary improvements and unnecessary mandates. It throws money, labor, and attention at *every* crosswalk instead of focusing on the actual problem areas.

That is not efficient.

That is not sustainable.

And that is not smart policy.

## **Conclusion**

Delegates, the desire to protect students is universal. But legislation must be realistic, not symbolic. The “School Zone Crosswalk Safety Act of 2025” places costly, unfunded, and overly broad requirements on cities that are already struggling to maintain basic infrastructure.

This bill does not improve safety in a strategic or targeted way. Instead, it adds requirements without reason, burdens cities without resources, and forces compliance without flexibility.

If we are going to invest in safer school zones, we need a plan that is:

- Funded
- Targeted
- Feasible
- And locally informed

This bill is none of those things and therefore must be opposed.

