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**An Bille um Thrácht Ar Bhóithre  
(Achar Scoite Íosta Do Rothaithe), 2017  
Road Traffic  
(Minimum Passing Distance of Cyclists) Bill 2017**

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*Meabhrán Míitheach  
Explanatory Memorandum*

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**AN BILLE UM THRÁCHT AR BHÓITHRE  
(ACHAR SCOITE ÍOSTA DO ROTHAITHE), 2017  
ROAD TRAFFIC  
(MINIMUM PASSING DISTANCE OF CYCLISTS) BILL 2017**

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**EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM**

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**Purpose of the Bill**

The purpose of the Road Traffic (Minimum Passing Distance of Cyclists) Bill is to reduce the number of accidents on our roads by legislating for the creation of a safe space on our roads where cyclists can feel protected. Current law does not offer this protection and as a result we are seeing an increased number of injuries and deaths arising from drivers' failure to provide a safe passing distance when overtaking cyclists.

Irish law does not currently set out a minimum safe passing distance but rather sets out that "A driver shall not overtake, or attempt to overtake, if to do so would endanger, or cause inconvenience to, any other person."

This Bill sets out to learn from the recent international trend where a number of jurisdictions have introduced minimum passing distances for motorists overtaking cyclists. These safe passing distances range from 3 feet in many U.S. States to 1 or 1.5 metres in some European or Australian jurisdictions depending on the speed limit on a particular road. These initiatives aim to make it safer for cyclists to share the road with motor vehicles and to minimise accidents.

Passage of this Bill into law will move Ireland to the forefront of nations introducing legislative regulation in this area while also learning from the experiences of those jurisdictions across the globe that have already taken this step.

A law such as this recognises that an increasing number of people, many of them children, are using bicycles to commute to work or school and for leisure activities on a daily basis. It also recognises that cyclists are vulnerable road users more likely to suffer serious injury or even death if in collision with a motor vehicle or destabilised by the close passing of a vehicle. Steps must be taken to protect cyclists on our roads, in urban and rural areas, while also ensuring that the drivers of motor vehicles and the riders of bicycles are able to share the roads without undue inconvenience to either.

Ultimately the aim of this Bill is to reduce the number of accidents on our roads involving motor vehicles and bicycles and make our roads a safer place for both drivers and cyclists.

**Main Provisions of the Bill**

*Section 1* sets out the legal definition of "pedal bicycle" and "mechanically propelled vehicle" as they apply in this Bill.

*Section 2(2)(a)* sets out the general provision that the driver of a motor vehicle must when passing a cyclist, travelling in the same direction, pass at a sufficient distance.

*Section 2(2)(b)* sets out the sufficient distance required when passing as 1 metre in an area where the speed limit is not more than 50 kilometres per hour and 1.5 metres in an area where the speed limit is more than 50 kilometres per hour.

*Section 2(3)* sets out which points on the motor vehicle and bicycle define the distance to be measured to determine the lateral distance.

*Section 2(4)* sets out the penalties for committing such an offence both as a fixed charge and on conviction in court.

*An Teachta Ciarán Ó Canáin,  
Feabhra, 2017.*