

Rep. Bergman T&I Member Day 2026 Statement for Record

Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee—thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

I come before you with a perspective shaped by service, responsibility, and respect for the lives of those we are entrusted to protect.

This bill bears the name of Sarah Debbink Langenkamp, and that matters. Sarah was a daughter, a wife, and a young American whose life was taken far too soon. Behind her name is a family that understands sacrifice in the deepest sense. I had the honor of serving alongside Sarah's father, Admiral Dirck Debbink, when he was Commander of the Naval Reserve and I was Commander of Marine Forces Reserve. We both wore the uniform. We both led Americans in harm's way. And we both understood that leadership carries with it a solemn obligation: to do everything in our power to protect life.

That obligation does not end when the uniform comes off.

H.R. 2011 is not about ideology. It is about responsible governance, practical safety, and using existing federal programs more effectively—especially in communities where resources are limited and consequences are real.

In places like Northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula, our roads are not theoretical. They are how people get to work, to school, to church, and home to their families. They serve motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and farm equipment—often all at once. When infrastructure is disconnected or outdated, the risks are higher, and the margin for error is smaller.

What this bill does—importantly—is allow states and local governments to fix real safety problems without creating new federal mandates. It recognizes that sometimes the most effective safety improvement is simply connecting what already exists. It gives states flexibility to address known dangers to vulnerable road users using data, engineering judgment, and proven countermeasures.

From a conservative standpoint, I support three core principles reflected in this legislation:

First, state and local control. Decisions remain with those closest to the problem—not dictated from Washington.

Second, fiscal responsibility. The bill does not create a new program or expand bureaucracy. It improves how existing safety dollars can be used—especially where matching funds would otherwise prevent lifesaving projects from moving forward.

Third, accountability measured in outcomes. Fewer deaths. Fewer serious injuries. Safer roads. Those are results every Member of this Committee should stand behind.

Honoring Sarah means more than naming a bill. It means acting with seriousness, humility, and purpose to prevent another family from experiencing the same loss. As leaders—whether in uniform or in Congress—we do not always get a second chance to do the right thing. When we do, we should take it.

I thank the Committee for its work, and I urge thoughtful consideration of this legislation with respect for local needs, state authority, and the value of every American life.

Thank you, and I look forward to working with you as this bill moves forward.