



## Office of The Mayor Celina R. Benitez

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1 Municipal Place, Mount Rainier, Maryland 20712 Telephone: (301) 985-6585 [MountRainierMD.org](http://MountRainierMD.org)

March 1, 2026

**RE: Support for Senate Bill 526**

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment committee:

I am writing to express our strong support for **Senate Bill 526**, which designates November 14 as “Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day” and the second Wednesday in October as Maryland School Pedestrian Awareness Day each year.

This important legislation not only honors Ruby Bridges’ historic role in desegregating public schools but also provides an opportunity for students across the state to engage in meaningful discussions about civil rights, diversity, and social justice. It also raises awareness on Pedestrian Safety, saving lives.

Our community has already demonstrated a strong commitment to this initiative. The Mount Rainier Elementary School Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) has been an active participant in recognizing Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day, and in the following year, Thomas Stone Elementary also received an award for organizing their own walk. These efforts reflect the enthusiasm and dedication of our schools in fostering conversations about equality, history, and the power of civic action. We have also reduced the speed limit in our city to 20mph and have been working to continue creating safe streets that are walkable and bikeable for our residents and visitors. Raising Pedestrian Safety awareness in the state will continue helping reach the goal of achieving zero pedestrian fatalities.

Additionally, as Mayor of Mount Rainier, I have taken official steps to support this initiative by issuing a proclamation declaring “Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day” in our city. This proclamation underscores our city’s dedication to honoring Ruby Bridges’ courage and to reinforcing the importance of inclusive education and safety in our schools and community.

**Senate Bill 526** will further institutionalize these efforts by ensuring that every public school in Maryland has the opportunity to commemorate Ruby Bridges and engage students in learning about the ongoing struggle for educational equity. As well as raising awareness of pedestrian safety and saving lives.

We urge for a **favorable report on Senate Bill 526** and join us in fostering a more just, safe, and inclusive future for our students and community.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued leadership. Please feel free to contact me at 301-985-6585 or via email [MayorBenitez@MountRainierMd.org](mailto:MayorBenitez@MountRainierMd.org) if you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Celina R. Benitez*

Mayor Celina R. Benitez, City of Mount Rainier.