



Congresswoman Nikema Williams
Georgia's Fifth Congressional District

H.R. 2859: Restoring Neighborhoods and Strengthening Communities Act

After the enactment of the Federal Aid Highway Act in 1956, many city planners built highways through the middle of cities to connect White families that were moving to the suburbs with the downtown of cities. Unfortunately, many of these urban renewal projects were intentionally chosen to segregate and displace people of color.

Summary: This bill would reconnect impacted neighborhoods, reduce climate pollution by increasing access to modes of transportation like biking and walking, create more open spaces and improve the air quality and health outcomes for residents. Specifically, the bill would:

- Establish the Restoring Neighborhoods and Strengthening Communities Program at the Department of Transportation that will help communities identify infrastructural barriers within the community that have created obstacles for mobility and economic development.
- Allow the Secretary to award grants to redesign or deconstruct the outdated infrastructure that has hindered the growth of low-income and minority communities. The Secretary shall award the following grants under the program:
 - Community Engagement, Education, and Capacity Building Grants.
 - Planning and Feasibility Study Grants.
 - Capitol Construction Grants.
- Establish community land trusts to help generate wealth for the communities that already reside in these neighborhoods.
- Update federal transportation modeling tools so that decision-makers and communities can see how these infrastructure projects really impact traffic patterns today.
- Require the Secretary to conduct a study and issue a report to Congress identifying the communities with infrastructure barriers, measuring the degree of harm to that community.
- Authorize \$15 billion to carry out the program and require that at least 40 percent of the funds are directed towards environmental justice communities.