



AAA Mid-Atlantic's Testimony in **OPPOSITION** to **HB 920** **Motor Vehicles - Motorcycles - Overtaking and Passing Vehicles**

Sponsors: Delegates Szeliga, Arentz, Jacobs, Johnson, and Mautz

- AAA Mid-Atlantic opposes **HB 920**, which would require the Motor Vehicle Administration to adopt guidelines for the operation of a motorcycle on a roadway that is divided into two or more clearly marked lanes for vehicular traffic and repeal provisions of law that prohibit an operator of a motorcycle on certain roadways from overtaking and passing in the same lane occupied by the vehicle being overtaken, and from operating a motorcycle between lanes of traffic or between adjacent lanes or rows of vehicles.
- As a policy position, AAA opposes legalizing lane-splitting where currently prohibited. It is currently against the law in **Maryland** for an operator of a motorcycle to overtake and pass in the same lane occupied by a vehicle being overtaken. In addition, “a person may not operate a motorcycle between lanes of traffic or between adjacent lines or rows of vehicles.”
- A violation of the aforementioned law is a misdemeanor carrying a maximum \$500 fine. The **District Court** prepayment penalty for operating between lanes of traffic or between adjacent lines or rows of vehicles is \$110 and the assessment of one point against the violator’s license. A violation, which contributes to a crash, increases to a \$150 fine and three points against the violator’s licenses.
- Lane-splitting is dangerous to both motorcycle operators and vehicle operators and could result in sideswipe and turn-into-path collisions as drivers in moving traffic may not expect to be passed by an object traveling between lanes (Sexton, Fletcher and Hamilton 2004; Clarke et al. 2004; Crundall et al. 2008).
- AAA **research**, conducted with the Automobile Club of Southern California’s Automotive Research Center, found that blind spot monitoring systems detected motorcycles on average 26% later than they detect full-size sedans. Speed differential is an important factor in determining crash risk, as larger differences in speed between vehicles are related to higher crash rates.
- The Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration’s **Motorcycle Operator Manual** states that, “Cars and motorcycles need a full lane to operate safely.” Further, “Riding between rows of stopped or moving cars in the same lane can leave you vulnerable to the unexpected. A hand could come out of the window; a door could open; a car could turn suddenly.” The manual instructs riders to “Keep a center-portion position whenever drivers might be tempted to squeeze by you.”
- In 2018, 4,985 motorcycle operators died in traffic crashes according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
- Currently, only California law permits this practice. In 2019 and **2020**, Virginia legislation failed that would have allowed motorcycle riders to use the right shoulder of limited access highways when traffic was stopped or traveling less than 10 mph. In recent years, legislation has failed in Arizona, Georgia, Hawaii, New York, Oregon and Texas.

- AAA opposes legislation that would leave motorcycle riders and drivers vulnerable to unsafe operation on Maryland roads. Therefore, we oppose **HB 920** and respectfully, urge the Committee to render an unfavorable report.

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