



Support SB512

Vulnerable Road Users

Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis & Anne Arundel County
P.O. Box 208, Arnold, MD 21012 www.bikeaaa.org

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

February 20, 2020

RE: SUPPORT Senate Bill 512

Dear Chairman and Members of the Committee,

I am a resident of District 33, president of Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis and Anne Arundel County ("BikeAAA"), Chair of the Anne Arundel County Bicycle Advisory Commission, Member of the 2017 Maryland Bicycle Safety Task Force and avid Maryland cyclist for over 20 years. On behalf of BikeAAA and it's more than 900 members, I support Senate Bill 512. This bill will raise the duty of care for drivers when they encounter pedestrians, bicyclists, wheelchair users and other vulnerable road users lawfully using or crossing our roads. They key benefits of this law include:

- Deterrence for bad driver behaviors around vulnerable users.
- Fills gaps between ordinary traffic violations and more severe offenses, providing additional charging options to local law enforcement and prosecutors
- Allows stronger penalties in cases in serious injury or death
- Promotes public awareness of the threat posed by motor vehicles and the vulnerability of people outside of motor vehicles.

This was recommended by the Maryland Bicycle Safety Task Force and is based on a model law provided by the League of American Bicyclists. It also aligns with the goals of the Maryland Strategic Highway Safety Plan and Maryland's Vision Zero program. Nine other states have Vulnerable Road User laws. Drivers of vehicles which are potentially lethal to lawful road users outside of vehicles should have greater awareness and face tougher penalties

In 2019, the House unanimously passed a substantially identical bill.

Safe biking and walking promote health, reduce traffic, improve the environment and stimulate economic growth for all Marylanders. This bill will advance safe, active transportation.

Sincerely,

Jon Korin
President, Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis & Anne Arundel County

Tel: 443-685-4103

Attachments

Addresses the U.S. Rising Rate of Pedestrian Deaths Even As Total Traffic Deaths Are Declining

Pedestrian Traffic Fatalities by State
2018 PRELIMINARY DATA

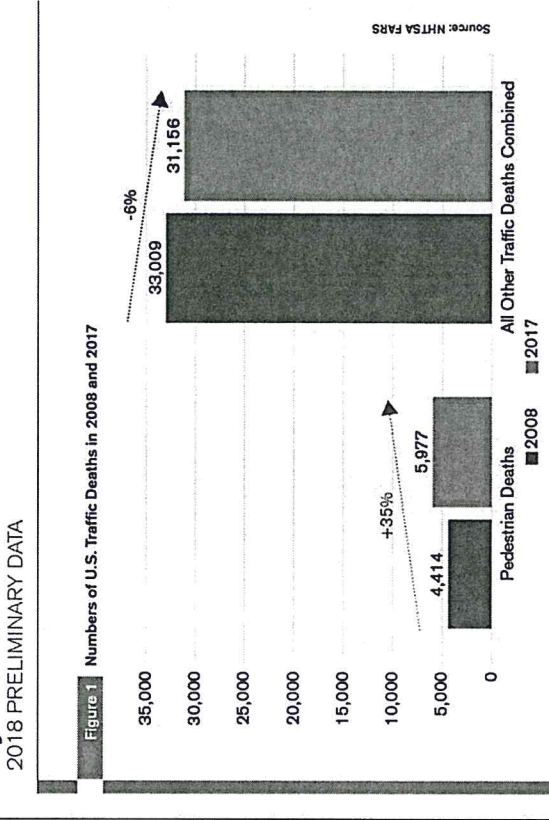
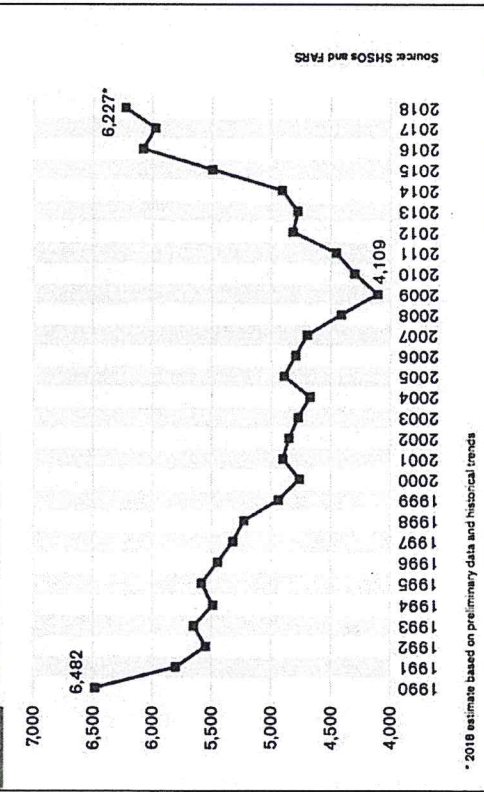


Figure 3 U.S. Pedestrian Fatalities: 1990 - 2018



This is what a pedestrian safety crisis looks like. Graph: Governor's Highway Safety Association

In Maryland pedestrian fatalities rose from 48 in the first half of 2017 to 60 in the first half of 2018

Pedestrian Traffic Fatalities by State

2018 PRELIMINARY DATA

Table 3

Pedestrian Fatalities by State, Jan - June 2017 & 2018
Source: State Highway Safety Offices

State	Sorted by Percentage Change			Change from 2017 to 2018 #	Change from 2017 to 2018 %
	Jan-Jun 2017	Jan-Jun 2018 (Preliminary Adjusted)	%		
Hawaii	1	19	+18	+1800%	
South Dakota	2	5	+3	+150%	
Nebraska	7	12	+5	+71%	
Connecticut	19	29	+10	+53%	
New Mexico	32	47	+15	+47%	
Mississippi	31	44	+13	+42%	
Pennsylvania	64	90	+26	+41%	
Kansas	12	16	+4	+33%	
Wyoming	3	4	+1	+33%	
Georgia	101	133	+32	+32%	
Maryland	48	60	+12	+25%	
North Carolina	83	102	+19	+23%	
Montana	5	6	+1	+20%	
Illinois	67	80	+13	+19%	
Virginia	45	53	+8	+18%	
Ohio	55	63	+8	+15%	
DC	7	8	+1	+14%	
Arizona	112	125	+13	+12%	
Louisiana	69	77	+8	+12%	
Texas	266	298	+32	+12%	
Massachusetts	35	38	+3	+9%	
New Jersey	67	73	+6	+9%	
South Carolina	69	74	+5	+7%	
Missouri	42	44	+2	+5%	
New York	112	117	+5	+4%	
Florida	326	330	+4	+1%	
North Dakota	3	3	0	0%	

Maryland had the 11th highest increase (25%) in pedestrian deaths from first half 2017 to 2018

Vulnerable Road User Law Fills a Gap in our Traffic Laws By Raising the Penalties for Drivers Who Commit traffic offenses that result in death or serious injury of a vulnerable user*

Degree Of Negligence	DUI	Carozza Bill SB29	Gross Neg. Manslaughter	Crimi. Neg. Manslaughter (2-210)	VRU Bill HB721/SB512	Consequence
Gross Negligence						Death
Criminal Negligence						Life-threatening Injury
Reckless	Reckless Driving					Serious Injury
Traffic	Traffic Citations					Minor Injury
						Property
						None

*Similarly Bill SB29 fills a different gap by providing reduced penalties for criminal negligence resulting in life-threatening injury vs. death as provided in existing law 2-210