

January 25, 2021

Maryland General Assembly,

Nationally, 25,000 children are injured each year in school zones and 100 are killed according to the Transportation Research Board. Maryland can take steps to minimize these traumatic events and tragedies.

Students should have a safe way to arrive and dismiss from school. Some students walk to school but are in danger if there are sidewalks missing, speed limits too high, or intersections are without lights or crosswalks. Some students take a bus because the roadways are too dangerous. Some students are driven to school by parents because the pathways are too hazardous (then increase problems with a crowded parent drop off loop). Walking home from school should be safe too - often older students stay after school for clubs and teams and it's darker in the late afternoon. Do the intersections give enough time for the student to get across the road? If not, a driver is likely to turn into the student accidentally.

All of these aspects pertain to the need for a safe, real school zone.

HB487 proposes including a student safety pedestrian plan in high density counties when a new school is constructed or renovated with a significant addition of students. Sadly, it takes legislation to insure the safe walking paths for our students. It's time we make every school area a actual safe zone and HB487 can start with new schools. I am in full support of this bill.

Melissa Regan

Germantown Pedestrian Safety Task Force

Seneca Valley High School PTSA Cluster Coordinator