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HB 285 Workgroup on Statewide Vehicle Crash Data Collection and Reporting
SUPPORT
Environment and the Transportation Committee
January 21, 2021

Good Afternoon Chairman Barve and Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee. I am Tammy Bresnahan, Director of Advocacy for AARP MD. As you may know, AARP Maryland is one of the largest membership-based organizations in the Free State, encompassing more than 850,000 members. I am here today representing AARP MD and its members in support of **HB 285 Workgroup on Statewide Vehicle Crash Data Collection and Reporting**.

AARP is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, nationwide organization that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse.

HB 285 establishes the workgroup on Statewide Vehicle Crash Data Collection and Reporting. The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) must provide staff for the workgroup. By December 1, 2021, the workgroup must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly.

Nationwide, drivers disproportionately strike and kill older adults, people of color, and people walking in low-income communities. Mobility is key to maintaining independence and to staying connected to the community. Older people consistently tell AARP that it's important for them to be able to stay in their homes and communities as they age.

AARP has long-promoted transportation options for older adults nationally and at the state and local levels. Older adults are more likely to experience challenges seeing, hearing, or moving, and if these trends are any indication, we are not devoting nearly enough attention to the unique needs of older adults when we design our streets.

According to AARP Public Policy, between 2008 and 2017 Black or African American people were 72% more likely to be struck and killed by a driver than people of other races. During the same time period, American Indian or Alaska Native people were over three times as likely to have been struck and killed by drivers while walking.

Real Possibilities

Structural racism has guided policy decisions about housing and transportation for decades, and the consequences of these decisions are still readily apparent in communities of color today. Older adults, as well as people of color, and people walking in low-income communities are disproportionately represented in fatal crashes involving people walking. People age 50 and up, and especially people age 75 and older, are overrepresented in deaths involving people walking.

While income data for people who are killed while walking is not available, people die at far higher rates while walking in lower-income communities compared to higher-income ones. Many of these lower-income communities are far less likely to have sidewalks, enough crosswalks and walk signals, and other features to support safety for people walking.

For these reasons, we ask the Committee for a Favorable report on House Bill 285. For questions, please contact Tammy Bresnahan at tbresnahan@aar.org or by calling 410-302-8451.