



Olivia Bartlett, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team

Committee: Appropriations Committee

Testimony on: HB0019 –Education—School Construction-Pedestrian Safety Plans
(Safe Walk to School Act)

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: January 18, 2022

Bill Contact: Delegate Jared Solomon

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with more than 3000 members in all districts in Montgomery County as well as in several neighboring jurisdictions. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep members of our communities and their families healthy and safe in a clean environment and which promote equity across all our diverse communities. The safety of our students is of paramount importance, and there have been too many recent reports of students being hit by cars or injured on their way to or from school.

Under legislation passed by the General Assembly implementing the BluePrint for Maryland's Future and the recently enacted Federal infrastructure legislation, there will be substantial funding available to construct new schools and expand or renovate others. Common sense suggests that, as proposed in HB0019, some of these funds be used to develop pedestrian safety plans to enhance students' safety. Students and parents must be confident that necessary sidewalks, cross walks, and bike lanes are in place to protect students arriving and departing from their schools. Fear should not be part of the school experience.

Furthermore, with many school districts struggling to find a sufficient number of bus drivers, it is imperative to plan for more parents driving their students to and from school and for more students walking or riding their bikes to and from school. With this expectation, preparation of a pedestrian safety plan, as proposed in HB0019 must be an essential element of the planning for construction of new schools and major school renovations.

Finally, increasing the number of students that can safely walk or ride bikes to schools will also help the environment by reducing the number of cars on the road and reducing the need for buses.

For all these reasons, DTMG strongly supports HB0019 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Olivia Bartlett
Co-lead, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team
oliviabartlett@verizon.net
240-751-5599