



HB19 – Education – School Construction – Pedestrian Safety Plans (Safe Walk to School Act)

House Appropriations Committee

January 18, 2022

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Position: Support

My name is Joshua Feldmark and I write this as a representative of Bike Maryland. We represent cyclists of all abilities across the state, cyclists who ride 5 miles around the park with their families, for transportation, to a 100 mile ride. Bike Maryland has over 18,000 members from across the state. Additionally, we consistently organize or advocate on behalf of pedestrians and many other non-vehicle transportation users.

Ultimately, our organization is about “mode shift” to walking, biking and other non-passenger vehicle transportation through all levels of our transportation infrastructure.

Mode shift will only be successful, however, if people feel and are safe when walking or cycling. There are nearly 3,000 pedestrians injured or killed annually in Maryland and the number of pedestrian fatalities has continued to climb in recent years. Additionally, low-income communities experience twice as many pedestrian fatalities as wealthier communities.

This bill tackles a key component in this overall campaign to make walking and biking safe and accessible, integrating plans into school construction. Making sure kids have safe accessible routes to school will help create the overall culture shift and as you know this bill will push school districts to integrate comprehensive safe routes to school planning and assessments into the overall building and expansions of schools.

The truth is that this proposal is where we can all agree. It should be safe for kids to walk to school and making sure that happens is a fundamental part of the design of the schools. This is a step that has been desperately needed for many years and so believe strongly that it is long overdue and support this whole heartedly.

We urge a favorable report