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SB 16 Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Support

January 31, 2023

Good afternoon Chairman Smith and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. I am Priscilla Kania, lead advocate for AARP Maryland and resident of Anne Arundel County. On behalf of our 850,000 members, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of **SB 16 Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023**. We thank Senator Waldstreicher for introducing SB 16.

SB16 requires the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), in developing any construction or improvement project, or postconstruction project, preservation, or maintenance, to recommend and implement specified design elements for pedestrian and bicycle safety. If a new project is projected to take more than 12 months to complete, MDOT must implement all possible incremental near-term safety improvements immediately, as specified. The bill also establishes reporting requirements for the State Highway Administration (SHA) that relate to pedestrian and bicycle safety. The bill takes effect June 1, 2023.

Everyone should feel safe crossing a street. But the streets can be dangerous, especially for older Americans. The number of pedestrians killed by vehicles rose 35 percent in the past decade — and the death rate is almost twice as high for people over 75 as for the general population.

Making streets safe has been an important issue for AARP. This issue is of critical importance to AARP's members. When older Marylanders don't feel safe crossing the street, they are less engaged.

AARP has included pedestrian safety as one of the measures of quality of life on our livability index, and we invite you to check out how well your city does, at [AARP Livability Index](#). You'll also be able to see how your area stacks up on housing, environment, health, convenience and opportunity.

Safe streets and roads are important for all of us. Many of us walk, and we drive cars, but we also use walkers, canes or even push a stroller. Drivers should share the roads, and roads should be safe for all. Help us make America's streets safer for all.

For these reasons we ask the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 16. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Tammy Bresnahan at tbresnahan@aarp.org or by calling 410-302-8451.

