

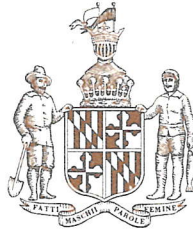
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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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Senate Bill 939 – Criminal Law – Reckless Endangerment – Use of a Motor Vehicle

March 6, 2024

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

Preliminary data by Maryland Motor Vehicle Association's Highway Safety Office indicate that last year 605 people died on Maryland roadways, with speed being a factor in 161 fatalities and aggressive driving was a factor in 69 fatal crashes. There are continued concerns about the safety of our roadways due to reckless and aggressive driving. Drivers, pedestrians, cyclists and workers are all being put in harm's way by the actions of drivers who operate their motor vehicles with blatant disregard for public safety.

Under the current Criminal Law Article 3-204:

(a) A person may not recklessly:

(1) engage in conduct that creates a substantial risk of death or serious physical injury to another; or

(2) discharge a firearm from a motor vehicle in a manner that creates a substantial risk of death or serious physical injury to another.

(b) A person who violates this section is guilty of the misdemeanor of reckless endangerment and on conviction is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 5 years or a fine not exceeding \$5,000 or both.

(c) (1) Subsection (a)(1) of this section does not apply to conduct involving:

(i) the use of a motor vehicle, as defined in § 11-135 of the Transportation Article

Senate Bill 939 will remove (c) (i), thus making the reckless use of a motor vehicle a criminal offense subject to imprisonment not exceeding 5 years or a fine not exceeding \$5,000 or both.

We have seen too many cases where drivers involved in fatal or serious crashes in Maryland are receiving a slap on the wrist and some who are then back on the road driving in the same reckless manner. People who disregard the rules of the road and operate their motor vehicles in a dangerous and deadly way need to be held accountable and so I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 939.