

MCPA-MSA_HB 601_Street Racing and Exhibition Drivi

Uploaded by: Andrea Mansfield

Position: FAV



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chair and
Members of the House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Darren Popkin, Executive Director, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Natasha Mehu, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: February 15, 2024

RE: **HB 601 – Street Racing and Exhibition Driving – Prohibited Acts,
Enforcement, and Penalties**

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT HB 601**. This bill is intended to address public safety situations that occur from street racing and exhibition driving. The bill increases the points on an individual's license and the penalties associated with these activities.

Across Maryland, there have been continual concerns regarding the safety of our roadways due to the reckless and careless driving engaged in by Street Racers and Exhibition Drivers. The actions of these drivers, who often conduct such activities with large groups of competitors and observers, often cause roadways to be closed to other traffic, including first responders en route to provide care for others. They also cause others using our roadways, including pedestrians and bicyclists, to be placed in grave danger due to their actions. These actions include conducting speed contests on our roads, closing roadways with vehicles and human chains, and conducting exhibition driving activities - all with a careless disregard for others. These activities have been ongoing across our state for several years and require legislation to properly address such activities, help preserve the safety and welfare of all, and achieve our goals of reducing traffic and pedestrian-related fatalities and injuries. Legislation recently passed to establish "special event zones" in Ocean City to address these types of events has been extremely effective.

HB 601 extends these measures statewide. HB 601 proposes a reasonable solution to address the egregious behavior of street racing and exhibition driving.

For this reason, MCPA and MSA **SUPPORT HB 601** and urge a **FAVORABLE** Committee report.

MML-HB 601 - FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Bill Jorch

Position: FAV



Maryland Municipal League
The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns

TESTIMONY

February 15, 2024

Committee: House Environment and Transportation

Bill: HB 601 - Street Racing and Exhibition Driving - Prohibited Acts, Enforcement, and Penalties

Position: Favorable

Reason for Position:

The Maryland Municipal League (MML) supports House Bill 601 which prohibits exhibition driving and authorizes local governments state-wide to designate a “special event zone” on roadways under their jurisdiction. These changes will significantly improve roadway safety by addressing the problem of exhibition driving.

Expressly defining and prohibiting exhibition driving on all public roads sends a clear message that this type of behavior is dangerous and a problem across Maryland. Currently, only in Worcester County can a local government designate a special event zone and see the additional benefits of doing so. In a special event zone, a local government can lower the speed limit further and add additional signage indicating penalties for certain violations. HB 601 expands the authority to designate a special event zone to local governments state-wide.

One municipality, Ocean City, has used this authority to promote roadway safety during motor events that take place. Special event zones have helped the city to implement additional safety measures at events that draw a high number of motor vehicles and pedestrians in a crowded area.

The provisions of HB 601 should significantly assist municipal governments promote roadway safety through the prohibition of exhibition generally and a new state-wide authority for local governments to establish special event zones. For these reasons, the League respectfully requests that the committee provide House Bill 601 with a favorable report.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Theresa Kuhns	Chief Executive Officer
Angelica Bailey Thupari, Esq.	Director, Advocacy & Public Affairs
Bill Jorch	Director, Public Policy & Research
Justin Fiore	Deputy Director, Advocacy & Public Affairs

HB0601 SUPPORT.pdf

Uploaded by: Caroline Davenport

Position: FAV

February 15, 2024

Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SUPPORT for House Bill 601 Street Racing and Exhibition Driving – Prohibited Acts, Enforcement, and Penalties

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Esteemed Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

I write in strong support of House Bill 601, which would alter penalties and points assessments for motor vehicle violations related to participation in a race or speed contest and exhibition driving on any highway or private property that is used by the public for driving.

The 2022 version of this bill passed both the Senate and House and was vetoed by then-Governor Larry Hogan. The 2023 version of this legislation passed the House. This year's version of the bill incorporates previous years' amendments and reflects the extensive conversations that the House and Senate sponsors have had with stakeholders.

Specifically, this bill would establish an eight point penalty for participating in a race or speed contest on a highway and/or engaging in exhibition driving on a highway and a 12 point penalty for participating in a race or speed contest and/or engaging in exhibition driving on a highway that results in serious bodily injury to another person. Additionally, this bill would establish that a person convicted of a violation would be subject to imprisonment not exceeding 60 days or a fine not exceeding \$1,000 or both and that a person convicted of a violation that results in serious bodily injury to another person is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 10 years or a fine not exceeding \$1,000 or both.

There are guardrails built into this legislation. The bill specifies that a court may consider in defense of a charge for exhibition driving that the individual driving the motor vehicle acted in a reasonable manner for safety purposes or that the individual driving the motor vehicle was participating in a properly permitted parade at the time of the alleged violation. Furthermore, the legislation has carve-outs for Worcester County and therefore does not interfere with any of the events or activities in Ocean City.

This is an issue of serious and persistent concern to your constituents. Regrettably, the issues of street racing and exhibition driving are long-standing and continuing to worsen. The majority of people to whom I speak - regardless of age, gender, race, or income - complain about loud engines, speeding, and reckless and aggressive driving and would welcome increased enforcement and penalties for street racing and exhibition driving. I myself live at a busy intersection where loud drag racing disturbs my family every night, and I witness speeding and reckless driving on the roads every day. This is a problem that plagues neighborhoods regardless of how urban, suburban, or rural they are, as evidenced by the fact that this bill is co-sponsored

by legislators from Montgomery, Prince George's, Anne Arundel, Frederick, Howard, Allegany, Washington, Charles, Calvert, Baltimore, and Baltimore City.

Nationally, traffic fatalities are trending down, but in 2023, Maryland saw its [highest fatality rate in nearly 20 years](#), reporting [600 deaths](#) on Maryland roads. The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) [states](#), “Speeding is a significant aggressive driving behavior and is estimated to be a contributing factor in over one-third of all fatal crashes nationwide. The probability of death or serious injury grows with impacts at higher speeds - doubling for every 10 MPH over 50 MPH that a vehicle travels.” By definition, street racing and exhibition driving involve speeding.

Street racing and exhibition driving also involve excessive, abrupt acceleration or deceleration; skidding, squealing, burning, or smoking of tires; swerving or swaying from side to side; the engine producing unreasonably loud, raucous, or disturbing noise; grinding the gears and the backfiring of the engine; the wheels losing contact with the ground; and transporting a passenger on or in an area of a motor vehicle that is not designed or intended for passenger transport such as the hood or roof.

These aggressive and reckless behaviors have no place on our roads. Engaging in such activities must carry strict consequences - and these consequences must actually be enforced. If not, we risk further erosion of the public’s belief that government is invested in its constituents’ welfare and is effective at passing, implementing, and enforcing laws that serve to protect the public interest.

MDOT [states](#), “Every crash is preventable. Every life counts. Maryland is dedicated to saving lives and preventing injuries from motor vehicle crashes.” Last September, Governor Wes Moore announced more than [\\$11.5 million](#) in funding for 85 organizations, agencies, and programs working to improve roadway safety in Maryland by preventing impaired, aggressive, and distracted driving; increasing safety for pedestrians and bicyclists; supporting police training for highway safety and traffic enforcement; funding overtime enforcement of traffic laws; and more. The Executive branch is taking action to address this urgent problem. I implore the legislature to do so as well. Enacting this legislation would be a meaningful step forward in the mission to prevent senseless injury and death.

Driving is a privilege, not a right. Willfully choosing to endanger the health, safety, and wellbeing of others must have consequences. Street racing and exhibition driving are not victimless crimes.

For the foregoing reasons, I urge a favorable report in order to protect the lives of your constituents who are threatened daily by these illegal activities.

Sincerely,

Caroline Davenport
Montgomery County resident

HB0601 - Danielle Singley - Favorable.pdf

Uploaded by: Danielle Singley

Position: FAV

In the Matter of HB 0601 - Street Racing & Exhibition Driving

2/15/2024

Dear Members of the MD House of Environment & Transportation Committee,

My name is Danielle Singley, and I am the President of the Westview Park Improvement & Civic Association in Catonsville, MD.

My testimony today is in support of House Bill 0601.

I reside in a community that consists of 1800 homes, and we are within a half mile radius of several major thoroughfares, including U.S. Route 70, U.S. Route 40, MD- Route 122 (Security Blvd.), Maryland Interstate 695, and the I-70 at I-695 Interchange. Westview Park also borders Westview Shopping Center in Catonsville and Security Square Mall in Windsor Mill. We are a community of young families and older adults.

- In March 2023, our area was inundated with people hosting large, unruly drag racing events at Security Mall in the middle of the night. The events drew hundreds of people and cars from across multiple states. Every weekend, my neighbors and I had to listen to loud music, cheering crowds, revving engines, spinning cars, screeching tires, mild crashes, and, eventually, police sirens. It was a tremendous hardship for our community.
- Also in March 2023, there was a horrific car crash on I 695 (near the Security/Woodlawn exit), which killed 6 highway workers. This car crash was the result of reckless driving at dangerously high speeds. I was 5 minutes behind that day. If I had left work on time, I too might have been involved in that crash. Any one of us could've been victims. I think about those families and the lost lives a lot.
- Regardless of this tragedy, the street racing continued throughout the summer months, every weekend at night, on I-70, and during the day on I-695.

Street racing is a public nuisance. It disturbs the peace and puts all of us in immediate danger.

Please vote in favor of House Bill 0601.

Sincerely,



Danielle Singley

President, Westview Park Improvement & Civic Association
Catonsville, MD 21228

Carrington 2024 - HB601 SB442 Race and Exhibition

Uploaded by: Darrell Carrington

Position: FAV



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

(301) 952-3700
County Council

POSITION STATEMENT

HB 601\SB 442 State Racing and Exhibition Driving – Prohibited Acts and
Delegates Lehman, et al. Enforcement
(ENT)
Senators Beidle, et al.
(JPR)

POSITION:

SUPPORT

HB 601\SB 442 – Street Racing and Exhibition Driving – Prohibited Acts and Enforcement – This bill alters certain penalties and the points assessments for certain motor vehicle violations related to participation in a race or speed contest; prohibiting a person from engaging in exhibition driving on any highway or private property that is used for driving by the public; prohibiting a person from attending as a spectator certain race or speed contests or any engagement of exhibition driving; and authorizing the towing and impounding of a vehicle involved in a race or speed contest or exhibition driving.

The Prince George's County Council and our residents have witnessed first-hand the incidents of dangerous speeding and racing contests on all of our public roads. It appears this behavior was exacerbated by the COVID Pandemic when empty roadways presented additional opportunities for these illegal activities. The Council believes that additional penalties must be imposed to stem the tide of this behavior that is a threat to human life. Accidents that will occur during these contests will likely lead to severe bodily injury and/or death. The Council believes that those persons that commit these offenses are aware that their actions are illegal and dangerous, therefore, each subsequent repeat offense of this title should result in severe, graduated penalties to the offender.

For the foregoing reasons, the Prince George's County Council **SUPPORTS HB 601\SB442** and respectfully requests your favorable consideration of its position.

Prepared by: Carrington & Associates, LLC
On behalf of the Prince George's County Council

HB601 Favorable 2024.pdf

Uploaded by: Dawn Luedtke

Position: FAV



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

DAWN LUEDTKE
COUNCILMEMBER
DISTRICT 7

February 13, 2024

The Honorable Delegate Marc Korman
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
251 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: House Bill 601 – *Street Racing and Exhibition Driving - Prohibited Acts, Enforcement, and Penalties*

Dear Chair Korman:

I write in support of House Bill 601, which increases the penalties for motor vehicle violations related to participation in a race or speed contest and exhibition driving on any highway or private property that is used by the public for driving.

In the past four years, there has been a significant increase in exhibition driving events, which present dangers to drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and other road users. These events involve excessive, abrupt acceleration or deceleration; skidding, squealing, burning, or smoking of tires; swerving or swaying from side to side; the engine producing unreasonably loud, raucous, or disturbing noise; grinding the gears and the backfiring of the engine; the wheels losing contact with the ground; and transporting a passenger on or in an area of a motor vehicle that is not designed or intended for passenger transport such as the hood or roof. Participants often use vehicles and “human chains” to block roadways to other traffic, including first responders on their way to provide emergency care.

These events are happening throughout Montgomery County and in areas of the County Council District I represent, including the Intercounty Connector. The individuals engaging in

this conduct do so without regard for the safety of other motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists performing maneuvers that may cause serious bodily injury or even death.

Montgomery County Police report several challenges in preemptively cracking down on this behavior. First, the planners of these events are very secretive about where and when the meetup will take place, often using a private social media account or encrypted channels to broadcast the location(s) where people should congregate. When police arrive, drivers scatter and head to the next location. Second, the details of the event often change in real-time, making it difficult for law enforcement to stay ahead of bad actors. Participants commonly swap out license plates and use false registrations while engaging in the meetups which results in limited utility of video or photographic evidence. While officers do engage in as many proactive measures as they can to prevent these incidents, legislation establishing stricter penalties will provide significant assistance in deterring future participation.

My constituents are deeply frustrated by the frequent instances of loud engine noise, speeding, and aggressive driving. They have been told time and again that increased enforcement tools and stronger penalties must occur at the State level. I know we are not alone in Montgomery County in dealing with this issue, and statewide action must occur in order to equip local jurisdictions with a stronger ability to diminish this conduct and keep our roads safe. **I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 601 from the Committee.**

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dawn Luedtke', written in a cursive style.

Dawn Luedtke

Cc: Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

HB601_Jung_FAV

Uploaded by: Deb Jung

Position: FAV



Howard County Council

Deb Jung
Councilmember

District 4

George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043-4392

February 15, 2024

HB 601
Deb Jung, Howard County Council
FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Delegate Marc Korman, Vice Delegate Regina Boyce, and Environment and Transportation Committee Members:

I strongly support HB 601 Street Racing and Exhibition Driving – Prohibited Acts, Enforcement, and Penalties. Thank you to Delegate Lehman and other sponsoring Delegates for introducing this much needed bill for local jurisdictions in Maryland.

Drag racing and exhibition driving increased during the COVID quarantine and have since become commonplace in many communities. Meet ups are planned via social media and large groups of cars gather to race down major State and local roads. Pop up events for exhibition driving occurs in local parking lots at all hours of the day and with parked cars and pedestrians present. Local police aren't able to respond quickly enough before the cars disperse.

As a Councilmember in Howard County, I am aware that most residents would welcome increased penalties for this type of activity. Complaints about loud engines and car racing frequently fill my Council inbox and were one of the most common concerns I heard when I was door knocking during my reelection campaign. My Councilmanic District is bounded by Route 29 and Route 108 and is bisected by Route 32. Loud engine noise and car racing is a frequent occurrence on these roads. I know this because I hear it from Route 32 in my home almost every night. Pop-up events in the parking lots at the Columbia Mall and our Village Centers resulted in property damage.

On August 8, 2022, one of our Columbia Village Boards held a town hall to discuss cars with modified engines racing through neighborhoods, car rallies disturbing the peace at local shopping centers, and illegal street racing. I attended the meeting as a panelist, as did other elected officials, the Howard County Police Chief Der, and Police Major Justin Baker, who directs field operations.

Former State Delegate Reid Novotny, another panelist that evening, related an incident he witnessed when returning home on Route 32 one evening with his child. He and nearby cars were brought to a stop by drag racers for an impromptu car race on the State highway. Needless to say, he expressed concern about the safety of his child during a routine trip home.

Chief Der stated that the problem of car rallies started in October 2020 and that in May 2021 police throughout the state started working cooperatively because the situation had escalated. Chief Der noted that the police monitor social media for rally locations to prevent gatherings designed to disturb the peace and endanger public safety. Major Baker stated that the most effective deterrent at present is the equipment repair order, which requires modified exhaust systems to be restored to factory settings. The police in attendance that night felt that any increased penalties or powers would help improve responses to the calls that they get.

At the end of the town hall, the panel discussed the 2022 General Assembly bill that would have given police the ability to impound on site but that bill was vetoed by then Governor Hogan. The following year, Senator Beidle introduced SB147, which also failed.

Our County Police Department has used the existing capabilities available to curtail this dangerous behavior, but the Department has expressed the need for more tools to be successful. I urge all of you to vote in favor of HB 601.

Thank your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Deb Jung
Council Chair, District 4

BaltimoreCounty_FAV_HB0601.pdf

Uploaded by: Giuliana Valencia-Banks

Position: FAV

JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI, JR.
County Executive



JENNIFER AIOSA
Director of Government Affairs

AMANDA KONTZ CARR
Legislative Officer

WILLIAM J. THORNE
Legislative Associate

BILL NO.: **HB 601**

TITLE: Street Racing and Exhibition Driving – Prohibition Acts, Enforcement, and Penalties

SPONSOR: Delegate Lehman

COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation

POSITION: **SUPPORTS**

DATE: February 15, 2024

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 601 – Street Racing and Exhibition Driving – Prohibition Acts, Enforcement, and Penalties. This legislation would increase the penalties for participating in street racing or exhibition driving.

HB 601 addresses the troubling trend of street racing and exhibition driving in communities across the state. More specifically, it prohibits participating in a race or speed contest on a highway, engaging in exhibition driving on a highway, and furthering these penalties for participating in either of these activities resulting in a serious bodily injury. The legislation allows those found in violation of these activities, absent seriously bodily injury, to be subject to 60 days or imprisonment, a fine not exceeding \$1,000, or both. By increasing these penalties, law enforcement can ensure that our communities are protected from the chaos and disruption of these dangerous events.

Accordingly, Baltimore County urges a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 601 from the House Environment and Transportation committee. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.

HB 601 Maryland State Police Position.pdf

Uploaded by: Joey Sybert

Position: FAV



State of Maryland
Department of State Police
Government Affairs Section
Annapolis Office (410) 260-6100

POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

DATE: February 15, 2024

BILL NUMBER: House Bill 601 **Position:** Support

BILL TITLE: Street Racing and Exhibition Driving – Prohibited Acts, Enforcement, and Penalties

REVIEW AND ANALYSIS:

This legislation seeks to prohibit a person from engaging in exhibition driving on any highway or private property that is designated for use by the public. This legislation defines exhibition driving, and provides for enhanced penalties, including incarceration, upon conviction. The bill further authorizes local jurisdictions to establish special events zones which allow law enforcement to arrest for certain violations committed within the zone.

The Maryland General Assembly enacted similar legislation in 2019 specific to Ocean City, Maryland in an effort to reduce the dangerous and unlawful operation of motor vehicles during unsanctioned events within the town. The most famous is the H2Oi event. Ocean City historically has three unsanctioned car events throughout the year. With funding from the Maryland Highway Safety Office and partnerships with the Department of State Police and the Worcester County Sheriff's Office, the Ocean City Police Department has made a combined effort to reduce the illegal activities of these events and maintain vehicle and pedestrian safety in the town. due to the direct impact the law had on violator's in Ocean city, the event organizers have now taken their activities north.

House Bill 601 will allow for other jurisdictions throughout the State to use the same law and tools to make their roadways safer. Currently, law enforcement can only issue citations for these types of driving behaviors. If exhibition drivers commit these violations within a special event zone, they are now subject to arrest. This not only prohibits the driver from continuing to drive in this reckless manner, but also acts as a deterrent to driving in this manner in the future.

In jurisdictions throughout the State, there have been countless examples of speed contests and exhibition driving resulting in the death of either participants or spectators. Recently, the Washington Metro area has experienced a number of exhibitions driving events, closing the beltway or other roadways. In Montgomery County, approximately two weeks ago, exhibition drivers and street racers took over an intersection.

The Maryland General Assembly has allowed for the use of speed monitoring cameras in areas known to have such violations, and this legislation will add another tool for law enforcement and local governments to ensure the safety of all persons within the State.

As written, HB 601 expands the ability of law enforcement to take a successful program, as demonstrated by Ocean City, statewide to combat this very unsafe driving behavior.

State of Maryland
Department of State Police
Government Affairs Section
Annapolis Office (410) 260-6100

POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

For these reasons, the Department of State Police urges the Committee to give House Bill 601 a favorable report.

02-12-24 usa channel 9 report on takoma park inter

Uploaded by: John Becker

Position: FAV

Source: wusa 9, by matt pusatory, 1:02pm, 2/12/24

TAKOMA PARK, Md. — Police are investigating after a chaotic scene at an intersection in Takoma Park over the weekend. Takoma Park Police investigators say a dangerous car meet-up took a violent turn.

Officers were first called to the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and Ethan Allen Avenue, near the Takoma Park U-Haul, for reports of reckless driving. Officers were met by a large crowd forming a circle around the intersection. Inside the circle cars were doing dangerous burnouts and donuts. A bystander [posted video of the scene on YouTube](#).

According to police, as officers moved in to try to break things up, the crowd's focus shifted toward them. People in the crowd surrounded the vehicles and began banging on the hoods and bumpers of the cruisers. People also taunted the officers, police said.

The responding officers used their lights and sirens to try to disperse the crowd to no avail. Police say some in the crowd were wearing bullet proof vests and said one person had a gun in their waistband.

That's when Takoma Park Police called for backup from Montgomery County Police and Prince George's County Police. As more officers arrived from neighboring jurisdictions, the crowd began to break up.

Many of the reckless drivers were seen heading toward D.C. Officers provided lookouts to DC Police.

"These reckless meet-ups violate several of Maryland's transportation laws and are illegal," Takoma Park Police said in a news release. "They are dangerous and jeopardize the safety and tranquility of our community. We are working with our allied partners in law enforcement to address this serious issue through education, enforcement, and changes to legislation."

So far, no arrests have been made related to the meet-up. Police say the investigation is active and ongoing.

Anyone who may have information that could help investigators should contact Takoma Park Police at (301) 270-1100.

SafeRoadsMD HB 601 Rec Favorable - Testimony Submi

Uploaded by: John Seng

Position: FAV



SafeRoadsMD

HB 601
“Street Racing and Exhibition Driving –
Prohibited Acts, Enforcement, and Penalties”
PLEASE SUPPORT

MARYLAND COALITION FOR ROADWAY SAFETY, INC.
URGES YOUR SUPPORT FOR HB 601

February 13, 2024

TO:

Honorable Delegate Marc Korman, Chair
Honorable Delegate Regina T. Boyce, Vice Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee
Maryland General Assembly
House Office Building, Room 251
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

FROM:

John J. Seng, Chair
SafeRoadsMD - *Maryland Coalition For Roadway Safety, Inc.*
JSeng@SafeRoadsMD.org SafeRoadsMD.org (202) 468-7682

Dear Chair Korman and Vice Chair Boyce:

SafeRoadsMD, a four-year old statewide non-profit advocacy organization, **strongly supports the enactment of HB 601, the “Street Racing and Exhibition Driving – Prohibited Acts, Enforcement, and Penalties” bill.**

We respectfully request that the House Environment and Transportation Committee submit a favorable response to this bill to combat not only persistent, but increasing episodes of highly-organized and frightening criminal exhibition driving in metropolitan centers and on roads throughout Maryland.

SafeRoadsMD consists of Marylanders who care and speak for all Marylanders concerned about and taking action to increase safety on our roads. Over the past three years, we have worked closely with Delegate Mary Lehman, her staff and other stakeholder groups to lobby and petition Maryland leaders to take alarm and strengthen laws to increase deterrence and eliminate the problem. I’d also like to acknowledge our appreciation for the leadership and work of ENT Transportation Committee Chair Delegate Sara Love in doing her best to advocate for similar bills during previous sessions and her future leadership in guiding this legislation.

As we all well know, each of the past two years, similar legislation was not enacted for reasons, while legitimate, nonetheless kept the Maryland General Assembly on the sidelines while organized gangs expanded their exhibition driving events in terms of frequency, crowd size and noise throughout Maryland. Senator Pamela Beidle reported Tuesday in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee that 139 major (exhibition driving) incidents took place in Maryland in the past year.

Maryland Coalition for Roadway Safety, Inc. PO Box 7, Olney, Maryland 20830

Please click on the [image below](#) for the sights and sounds of downtown Takoma Park this past late Saturday evening. And, **don't turn your volume down, but turn it up as loud as you can stand all 12 minutes of the video.** It's the closest experience you'll have compared to what Takoma Park homeowners and businesses endured.



How does one not recognize these takeovers for what they really are: domestic terrorism?

Maryland's become the "belly of the beast" in this illegal roadway crime. And your constituents pay the costs of destruction, interruption in services and threat to safety.

Approving HB 601 will begin to knock down the *Welcome to Maryland!* sign for these criminals.

The absence of substantial deterrents and inadequate law enforcement in Maryland invites the conspirators of illegal exhibition meet-ups. These unimpeded street exhibitions advertise Maryland as a street takeover haven where laws about anything and everything don't matter so much.

The Time is Now. Please Take The HB 601 Road Towards A Solution.

SafeRoadsMD agrees with HB 601's sponsor Delegate Lehman and the bill's 44 co-sponsors that **the best deterrents to this criminal behavior are to markedly increase sanctions.** Cross-filed with SB 442, the strengthened and, importantly, enforced sanctions of HB 601 will send a powerful message that Maryland lawmakers intend to restore safety and calm on roads and in communities: Continued roadway disruptions will not be tolerated, and violators will suffer significant penalties.

Maryland Lawmakers Can Create a Maryland Road Safety Legacy!

As we've shared with the ENT Committee in the past regarding road safety legislation: Is it possible that the Maryland General Assembly, with ENT's leadership in the House, could boldly take a preeminent role during this 2024 session by sending the message to the public and the legal system that Maryland lawmakers put 100% into ensuring that road safety comes first? Can the Maryland General Assembly join with Governor Moore to ensure that **no one and nothing's left behind in making roadway safety a #1 priority?**

We thank you both and the ENT Committee for your review of our position, and urge you to submit a favorable recommendation and support for HB 601.

Sincerely,

John J. Seng
Chair

Attachments: *They're Setting Our Roads On Fire! Maryland 2023*

cc: Governor Wes Moore
Senator Pamela Beidle, Senator Malcolm Augustine, Senator Dawn Gile
Delegate Sara Love, Delegate Mary Lehman
Ragina Ali, AAA MidAtlantic, SafeRoadsMD *Coalition* Board of Directors

THEY'RE SETTING OUR ROADS ON FIRE!

Q: WHY DOES MARYLAND ATTRACT CRIMINAL RAMPAGE ROAD VIOLENCE?

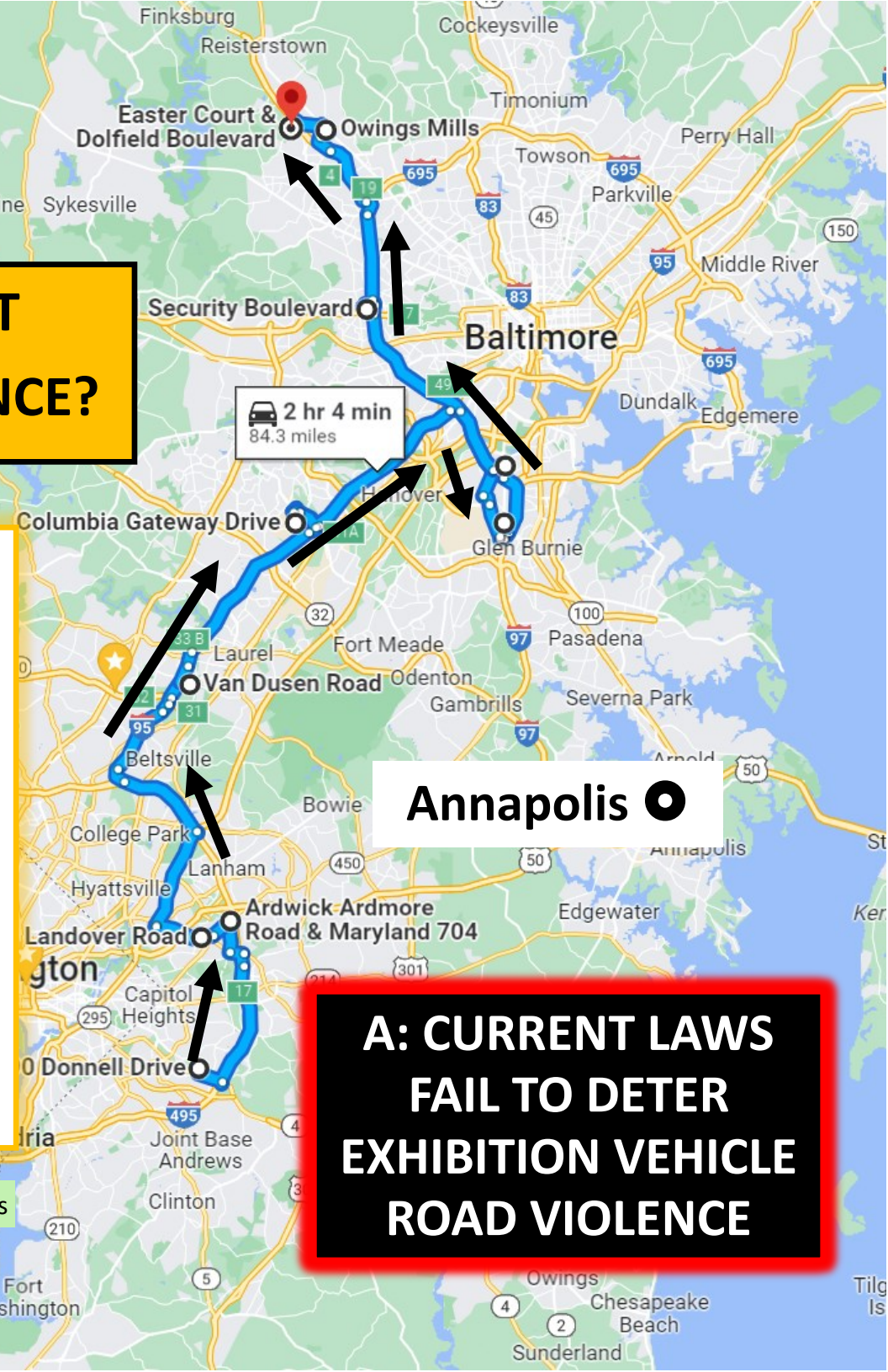
Maryland Roads Criminal Caravan Weekend

Sat-Sun March 25-26, 2023 Road Violence Chaos At a Glance

An organized, massive caravan plowed through Maryland: Night-time street takeovers, exhibition driving, blocked intersections, treacherous maneuvers, 300-plus size crowds, rings of gasoline fires, people hanging on cars, pedestrian struck by car, crowd members launching fireworks at police, burnouts, multiple automobiles racing, stolen vehicles & stunt car crashes.

- 8-1/2 hours non-stop mayhem, covering 85 miles, 10 different locales
- 4 counties (Prince George's, Anne Arundel, Howard, Baltimore)
- Hundreds of vehicles & people from Virginia, Maryland & elsewhere
- Cost to Maryland taxpayers: Untold tens of thousands of dollars in overtime pay & other extraordinary costs and safety risks for law enforcement & other first responders, public roads & private property damage; costs of disruption to Maryland communities and motorists

Source: Manis Canning & Associates



A: CURRENT LAWS FAIL TO DETER EXHIBITION VEHICLE ROAD VIOLENCE

HB 601 car rallies bill testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Kate Stewart

Position: FAV



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

KATE STEWART
VICE PRESIDENT
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

February 12, 2024

HB 601 - Street Racing and Exhibition Driving - Prohibited Acts, Enforcement, and Penalties
Position: SUPPORT

Chair Korman, members of the E&T committee, I am writing in support of HB 601 to increase prohibitions and penalties on street racing and unpermitted, dangerous car rallies. Today I am writing as the Councilmember for District 4 and speaking for myself, and not on behalf of the entire Montgomery County Council. This legislation is much needed and even though the Council has voted to support this legislation, I am additionally writing as an individual to emphasize how severe the growing challenges from these events have been in our district.

In my district, coordinated meetups of cars engaged in racing, doing donuts, skidding, swerving, and revving engines in a loud, raucous, and disturbing manner has threatened the safety of residents and created an atmosphere diminishing the area's quality of life and economic activity, especially in Downtown Silver Spring.

While Montgomery County Police have successfully prevented multiple of these events organized online from occurring, these rallies can create unpredictable situations and impede emergency responses to the events due to the sheer volume of vehicles blocking our roadways. While recent rallies have primarily been on public roadways, this legislation also covers and discourages rallies that may occur on private property, such as in parking lots.

Advancing this legislation is of the utmost urgency, as we cannot allow one of these events to result in serious injury or death to participants or spectators. Response to these rallies also diverts needed public safety resources from other incidents in our community. Please act swiftly to address this dangerous set of incidents of deep concern to our residents, and residents throughout the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Stewart".

Kate Stewart
Councilmember, District 4
Vice President, Montgomery County Council

HB601 LEHMAN TESTIMONY.pdf

Uploaded by: Mary Lehman

Position: FAV



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB601

**VEHICLE LAWS – STREET RACING AND EXHIBITION DRIVING—PROHIBITED ACTS,
ENFORCEMENT AND PENALTIES**

SUPPORT

MR. CHAIRMAN, VICE CHAIR AND COLLEAGUES. FOR THE RECORD, I AM DELEGATE MARY LEHMAN AND I AM ASKING FOR YOUR FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION OF HB 601, STREET RACING AND EXHIBITION DRIVING—PROHIBITED ACTS, ENFORCEMENT AND PENALTIES.

HB 601 CALLS FOR INCREASED PENALTIES FOR DRIVERS WHO TAKE PART IN EXHIBITION DRIVING CONTESTS. THE BILL COVERS STUNT AND HIGH-SPEED DRIVING ON PUBLIC ROADS AND IN PARKING LOTS.

THIS MARKS THE THIRD CONSECUTIVE ATTEMPT BY THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY SINCE 2022 TO PASS LEGISLATION TO DETER THESE DISRUPTIVE AND DANGEROUS EVENTS. THIS COMMITTEE AND THE FULL HOUSE HAVE APPROVED SIMILAR APPROVED EXHIBITION DRIVING BILLS IN 2022 AND 2023. THE 2022 LEGISLATION WAS VETOED; THE 2023 BILL FAILED TO GET OUT OF THE SENATE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE.

THE 2024 BILL DOES THREE MAIN THINGS:

- THE BILL MANDATES A COURT APPEARANCE; CURRENTLY A DRIVER IN A CAR CONTEST CAN PRE-PAY ANY FINES THAT ARE ASSESSED. WORCESTER COUNTY HAS BEEN ABLE TO REDUCE SPEED CONTESTS SIGNIFICANTLY BY REQUIRING MOTORISTS TO GO TO COURT AND FACE A JUDGE.

- THE BILL INCREASES THE POINTS ASSESSED AGAINST DRIVERS CONVICTED OF VIOLATING THIS LAW. DRIVERS WILL RECEIVE 8 POINTS IF THERE IS NO BODILY INJURY; 12 POINTS IF THE EVENT CAUSES BODILY INJURY.

THIS IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE 8 POINTS RESULTS IN THE SUSPENSION OF A LICENSE; 12 POINTS RESULTS IN A REVOCATION.

- THE BILL INCREASES A FINE OF UP TO \$1,000 UPON CONVICTION FOR A CONTEST WITH OR WITHOUT BODILY INJURY, UP FROM \$500.

CHANGES FROM THE 2023 LEGISLATION:

- IT CITES AS POSSIBLE DEFENSES OF A CHARGE OF EXHIBITION DRIVING THAT THE PERSON ACTED IN A REASONABLE MANNER FOR SAFETY PURPOSES; OR WAS PARTICIPATING IN A PROPERLY PERMITTED PARADE
- IT REFINES THE DEFINITION OF EXHIBITION DRIVING RELATED TO CARRYING PASSENGERS ON PARTS OF THE VEHICLE THAT ARE NOT INTENDED FOR THAT USE, SUCH AS THE HOOD AND ROOF.
- IT REMOVES THE PROVISION THAT PERMITTED POLICE TO IMPOUND A VEHICLE INVOLVED IN EXHIBITION DRIVING FOR SAFETY PURPOSES.
- IT INCORPORATES LANGUAGE THAT ALIGNS IT WITH KEY PROVISIONS OF OCEAN CITY'S STATUTE

COLLEAGUES, THESE DANGEROUS STUNT AND SPEED EVENTS HAVE GROWN IN SCALE AND FREQUENCY IN PART BECAUSE OUR EXISTING LAW IS NOT INTENDED TO DETER THEM. ABSENT MORE SERIOUS PENALTIES, EXHIBITION DRIVING WILL CONTINUE TO DISRUPT OUR

COMMUNITIES, ENDANGER LAW ENFORCEMENT AND RISK SERIOUS BODILY HARM TO PARTICIPANTS AND PASSERSBY WHO ARE TRAPPED IN THE STREET BLOCKADES.

I URGE YOUR FAVORABLE REPORT.

Testimony for House Bill 601 Mindy Badin.pdf

Uploaded by: Mindy Badin

Position: FAV

February 15, 2024

Testimony in support of House Bill 601

Hello. My name is Mindy Badin, I live in Montgomery County. How timely that we are talking about House Bill 601 so shortly after a massive exhibition driving episode occurred in Takoma Park? Cars were driving recklessly, doing donuts and burnouts. These activities are inherently dangerous not only to the participants but also to the general public, blocking access to roadways and hindering passage of all vehicles, including emergency vehicles. To make matters worse, police on the scene trying to disburse the crowd and ensure everyone's safety were met with taunting and disdain.

How many more of these events need to occur until something is done? The number of these exhibition driving events only seem to be growing; someone should not have to die in order to pass strict legislation to curtail these activities.

As a mother who has lost her son while he was crossing the street, I am concerned about any roadway activity which threatens the safety of our citizens. The participants know this is dangerous and illegal, yet they continue since there are no significant consequences. House Bill 601 addresses this need. House Bill 601 will provide stricter penalties for this dangerous and outrageous behavior; please give our law enforcement the tools they need to fight this criminal activity and pass House Bill 601. Thank you.

2024 HB601 Testimony to Transportation Committee.p

Uploaded by: Nancy Turner Smith

Position: FAV

Maryland legislators,

We are grateful that Delegate Lehman's bill, HB601 (Street Racing and Exhibition Driving), is being reviewed by the House Environment and Transportation Committee. We appreciate Delegate Lehman and Senator Beidle for their diligence on the matter of unlawful car rallies, and we respectfully ask this committee to move the bill forward.

My household - and literally hundreds of others throughout the region and the state - believe that we have raised adequate outcry to cause positive action on the traffic disruption, noise, and reckless endangerment caused by unlawful car meets. These gatherings frequently shut down roadways so that 100s of motorists are immobilized – and these motorists have included first responders and persons needing emergency medical attention. Moreover, hundreds of youths acting together have openly and aggressively defied our law enforcement officers on multiple occasions when they have tried to interrupt the group's unlawful behavior.

We are aware that penalties in place for Ocean City have brought positive results and we ask that similar law is enacted across the state. We ask that perpetrators face the possibility of arrest, steep fines, points on the driver's license, and vehicle impoundment or forfeiture (for multiple offenses).

Thank you for hearing us. Please support HB601.

Nancy Turner Smith and Jim Smith
Laurel, MD

nanturn@gmail.com

HB0601 - TSO -Street Racing and Exhibition Driving

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: FAV



Wes Moore
Governor
Aruna Miller
Lieutenant Governor
Paul J. Wiedefeld
Secretary

February 15, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
251 House Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

Re: *Letter of Support – House Bill 601 – Street Racing and Exhibition Driving - Prohibited Acts, Enforcement, and Penalties*

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) strongly supports House Bill 601 as a strategy to deter dangerous driving behavior and help the State achieve its goal of zero motor vehicle-related fatalities or serious injuries by 2030 on our roadways.

House Bill 601 proposes to establish penalties and points assessments for motor vehicle violations related to participation in a race or speed contest. Some of these penalties include prohibiting a person from engaging in exhibition driving on any highway or private property that is used for driving by the public; and establishing certain affirmative defenses to a charge of exhibition driving.

MDOT supports House Bill 601, as it stands as a crucial step towards safeguarding our communities by enhancing public safety measures. By promoting accountability and discouraging dangerous driving behavior, House Bill 601 seeks to protect the community at large and deter activity that could cause irreparable harm. Ensuring that the State's roadways and facilities are safe is MDOT's top priority.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee grant House Bill 601 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Pilar Helm
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090

HB 601 - AAA Testimony in Support of Street Racing

Uploaded by: Ragina Ali

Position: FAV



**AAA Mid-Atlantic's Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 601
Street Racing and Exhibition Driving - Prohibited Acts, Enforcement, and Penalties**

Sponsor: Delegate Lehman et al

- AAA Mid-Atlantic **supports House Bill 601**, which increases penalties for those participating in illegal racing or speed contests on Maryland roads and establishes a **statewide ban** on exhibition driving on any highway or private property that is used for driving by the general public.
- The bill also authorizes a police officer to order the towing and impounding of a vehicle that is driven in a race or is the subject of an exhibition driving violation.
- The bottom line is—speed kills—and our roadways and parking lots are not race tracks.
- In 2022, there were 534 fatal crashes in Maryland, resulting in 566 deaths, according to preliminary data from the [MDOT MVA Highway Safety Office](#). Speed was a factor in 110 of those fatalities and contributed to 2,185 injuries on Maryland roads. (*Source: MDOT MVA Highway Safety Office, data as of February 12, 2024*)
- Recently, law enforcement across the country, and here in Maryland, have cited an increase in street racing.
- Just this past weekend, there was a reckless and dangerous exhibition driving event in Takoma Park, where the illegal activity shut down traffic on Ethan Allen and New Hampshire Avenues, as reported by [WJLA](#).
- Last October, Baltimore County Police investigated reports of several unauthorized car rallies in Woodlawn, Owings Mills and Halethorpe, according to [media reports](#). Not only do these illegal activities disrupt traffic and create chaos, they are dangerous.
- In 2022, Maryland State Police investigated a multi-vehicle crash on Interstate 70, which was the result of illegal street racing.
- And in Baltimore City, despite a stiff city ordinance creating tougher penalties, illegal street races persist in [some neighborhoods](#) from time to time.
- In 2020, the MD State Police Golden Ring Barrack received 93 calls about illegal racing in Baltimore County alone.
- Tragically, in 2009, two people were killed and two more were seriously injured in Woodlawn as a result of illegal street racing on Interstate 70.

- In May 2019, 19-year old, Zach Friedlander and his dog were killed in Baltimore County as a result of a crash where the driver who hit him was reportedly street racing and driving at 116 mph in a 35 mph zone.
- And, in 2008, eight people were killed in Prince George's County when the driver of a car that was participating in an illegal race crashed into a crowd of spectators.
- In 2021, according to a [Washington Post article](#), Maryland State Police conducted a joint law enforcement initiative focused on speeding and aggressive driving for a four-day period on Interstate 70, which resulted in the issuance of more than 300 traffic citations and warnings.
- While recent research by the [AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety](#) found that even modestly higher speeds at the time of a crash dramatically increase the chances of severe injury and death, these dangerous illegal street races amplify those risks.
- Illegal street racing endangers everyone, including spectators. The reckless and irresponsible actions of those who choose to treat our roads as a race track have resulted in traffic disruption and fatalities on our roads.
- This legislation will increase penalties for those who engage in this activity and will give law enforcement more tools to combat this serious threat to traffic safety.
- On behalf of AAA Mid-Atlantic's over one million Maryland members, we urge the Committee to give **HB 601** a **favorable** report.

Contacts:

*Ragina C. Ali, AAA Mid-Atlantic
Public and Government Affairs Manager
443.465.5020*

*Sherrie Sims, GS Proctor & Associates
Senior Associate
410.733.7171*

Dear Delegates Bill 601.pdf

Uploaded by: Rev. Dr. Robert Screen

Position: FAV

Dear Delegates,

I support HB 601 to become law in the State of Maryland.

As a forty-eight year resident of Prince George's County Maryland, with the last 46 years in the Southern Maryland suburbs of Fort Washington and Accokeek, I now lead a traffic advocacy group named The 210 Traffic Safety Committee and also a founding board member of the Maryland Coalition for Roadway Safety.

Just two days before composing this Email, I, along with about twenty other motorist on a two lane roadway in my community, were detained and entrapped by an equal amount of motorcyclist absorbing both lanes doing wheelies and zig-zag driving.

The motorcyclist drove at least two plus miles of road until arriving at the first lighted intersection, whereby they all did a U-turn and performed the same exhibition activity going the opposite direction.

Bold, unsafe and lawless behavior has become the norm for to many traffic violators on busy road and highways, which hold entire communities hostage with irresponsible speeding, exhibition driving and the like. The general public has endured far too long the ill-behavior of those who make a mockery of antiquated laws, and timid and far too liberal policy and law-maker's measures, to bring truly deterrent accountable laws, policies and traffic rules, which bring safe, civil and responsible driving back to our communities.

For these reasons and more SB 442 must pass and become law!

Rev. Dr. Robert L. Screen Sr., Facilitator, MD 210 Traffic Safety Committee
18100 Breann Court. Accokeek, MD 20607

HB 601 Support (Ron Weiss).pdf

Uploaded by: Ron Weiss

Position: FAV

Support HB 601, Ron Weiss

Dear Delegates,

I am Ron Weiss, a resident of Fort Washington, a member of the MD 210 Traffic Safety Committee, and board member of the Maryland Coalition for Roadway Safety.

I urge your support of HB 601.

I support HB 601 because:

Maryland should not be a magnet for east-coast exhibition driving – Maryland should be the state those who what to show off their adolescent behavior avoid.

We should not let them endanger citizens and first responders.

We should not let them disrupt our right to a safe and peaceful life.

We should not let them hinder our businesses by taking over shopping centers.

They should not be able to create chaos in Takoma Park and bang on the cars of responding police officers.

This should not happen in a civilized state.

Please give us the tools we need to stop this outrageous behavior and report favorably on HB 601.

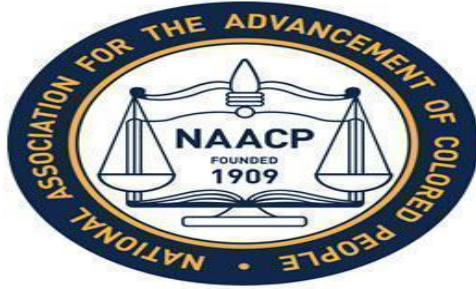
Thank you.

Ron Weiss, Fort Washington

HB0601 Favorable vote.pdf

Uploaded by: Ryan Coleman

Position: FAV



Randallstown

P.O. Box 731 Randallstown, MD 21133

Feb 13, 2024
Immediate Release

Contact: Ryan Coleman, President
randallstownnaacp@gmail.com

Randallstown NAACP supports HB0601-Street Racing and Exhibition Driving - Prohibited Acts, Enforcement, and Penalties

Randallstown MD- Locations throughout Baltimore County have large groups of young people converge at a pre-designated location, often blocking public streets or taking over parking lots, with participants in tuned-up cars doing burnouts, donuts, or racing, while hundreds of onlookers cheer them on from just feet away. And all of this is filmed and posted to social media for instant notoriety, with internet fame fueling weekly repeats of this behavior. This behavior causes confusion and endangers lives of participants and individuals passing by. We must take legislative action to protect Marylanders.

HB 0601 makes it easier to hold these offenders accountable. **The Randallstown NAACP requests a favorable vote on HB 0601.**

HB 601 - MoCo_Morningstar_FAV (GA 24).pdf

Uploaded by: Sara Morningstar

Position: FAV



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550

ANNAPOLIS: 240-777-8270

HB 601

DATE: February 15, 2024

SPONSOR: Delegate Lehman, et al.

ASSIGNED TO: Environment and Transportation

CONTACT PERSON: Sara Morningstar (Sara.Morningstar@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: SUPPORT

Street Racing and Exhibition Driving – Prohibited Acts, Enforcement, and Penalties

House Bill 601 addresses the Statewide public safety issue of street racing and car meet-ups that have become increasingly prevalent around the State. Specifically, the bill: (1) defines “exhibition driving”; (2) prohibits exhibition driving on any highway or private property used by the public for driving; (3) establishes affirmative defenses to a charge of exhibition driving; (4) strengthens penalties imposed for participating and engaging in street racing and exhibition driving; and (5) creates a specific carve-out for an annual event held in Ocean City. Montgomery County supports this bill.

The Montgomery County Department of Police (MCPD) reports that street racing and car meet-ups are a significant public safety issue. Through press releases and social media, MCPD has been working to proactively discourage this reckless driver behavior and has focused resources on dispersing them when they do occur. However, the increasing number of incidents, and the crowd sizes that they tend to generate, have at times overwhelmed traffic enforcement efforts that have resulted in shut-downs of major intersections and have created dangerous conditions for surrounding motorists and pedestrians.

House Bill 601 would enhance public safety by sending a strong message to all participants that street racing and exhibition driving is strictly prohibited in Maryland, and that those engaged in it will be penalized. Montgomery County supports this legislation and urges the Committee to adopt a favorable report.

HB0601-ET_MACo_SUP.pdf

Uploaded by: Sarah Sample

Position: FAV



House Bill 601

Street Racing and Exhibition Driving – Prohibited Acts, Enforcement, and Penalties

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Environment and Transportation
Committee

Date: February 15, 2024

From: Sarah Sample

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 601. This bill establishes prohibited acts, penalties, and enforcement for exhibition driving. Additionally, it authorizes statewide procedures for special sanctioned street racing and exhibition driving events in local jurisdictions.

Unauthorized and reckless exhibition driving has been increasing in Maryland, with a number of counties citing serious safety and quality of life concerns as a result. The bill's prohibitions and penalties make clear that individuals engaging in these restricted behaviors will be held accountable for the threat it poses to public safety.

Almost equally as important, the bill understands that local jurisdictions might opt to sanction temporary, safe, and controlled environments for drivers to perform in special event zones, where certain behaviors are specifically permitted. This authorization and flexibility further enable local governments to consider the needs and concerns of a wider range of residents and their interests.

Counties appreciate the comprehensive approach this bill takes to addressing this issue. MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 601.

Korman_HB0601_02072024 (003).pdf

Uploaded by: Stephanie Anderson

Position: FAV



CITY OF COLLEGE PARK

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL

7401 BALTIMORE AVENUE SUITE 201 COLLEGE PARK MD 20740 | COLLEGE PARKMD.GOV

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Mayor Pro Tem

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February 7, 2024

Delegate Marc Korman, Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support for House Bill 0601 - Street Racing and Exhibition Driving

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The College Park City Council voted unanimously during the meeting of February 6, 2024 to support HB0601, which would increase penalties for any driver unlawfully engaging in racing and exhibition driving on public roads.

Unfortunately, our residents have experienced an increase in this dangerous and disturbing behavior. One incident required a significant coordinated police response in order to disburse the offenders without further endangering the public. It is not unusual for groups of motorcycle and ATV drivers to briefly take over sections of Baltimore Avenue. Recently a number of exhibition drivers used the sidewalks and circled a police vehicle at an intersection trying to protect law-abiding drivers.

These actions harm communities and waste resources. HB0601 will penalize this dangerous behavior, reducing its occurrence and allow better use of our public safety resources.

Thank you for your consideration of the City's position.

Sincerely,

Fazlul Kabir
Mayor

cc: Maryland 21st District Delegation

HB 601-SB 442 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Stephanie Helsing

Position: FAV



OUR MISSION:

Working to enhance the economic prosperity of greater Silver Spring through robust promotion of our member businesses and unrelenting advocacy on their behalf.

February 13, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman
and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building
6 Bladen St.
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairperson Korman and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce, representing more than 300 employers, mostly small and minority owned businesses, in greater Silver Spring and surrounding areas in Montgomery County, we are submitting these comments of strong support for Senate Bill 442 and House Bill 601. After even more recent events, we are convinced now, more than ever, that this legislation will have a significant positive impact on the Silver Spring community and the State of Maryland as a whole.

The Chamber has always been about making greater Silver Spring a thriving business community, a place where people want to live, work, and come to enjoy what so many of us love about Silver Spring – our wonderful arts and entertainment venues, our breweries, our “United Nations” of restaurants, and our outdoor gathering spaces. But, like most everyone, we have been distressed about increased criminal activity, in many forms, that has invaded our community. In particular, the uptick in street takeovers and racing up and down the Route 29/Colesville Rd corridor is having a negative impact on the community and its overall safety.

This past weekend’s incident at the intersection of New Hampshire Ave and Ethan Allen Ave. in Takoma Park, puts a glaring spotlight on the necessity for legislation that more meaningfully addresses and penalizes these street takeovers. It is clear that current regulations are insufficient and do nothing to deter this type of crime and the perpetrators in these instances are well aware of it.

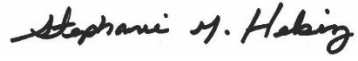
The Chamber has heard from property owners, businesses themselves, and residents who have been caught up in these terrifying rallies, sometimes unable to get away for hours because they are blocked in. This is a concern, just to grab dinner with their family or go to a movie on a Friday or Saturday night. I shouldn’t have to spell it out for this body that all it takes is once, and people will simply stop going out. COVID recovery has been slower for Silver Spring than other areas in Maryland, and this is one more deterrent that is impacting our business community and their ability to keep their doors open.

This situation, however, can be addressed and this proposed legislation by Delegate Lehman does just that. It is past time that this issue was met head on with punishments suitable for the crime, rather than a seeming “invitation” to bring your nefarious activities to Maryland. Our hardworking, and understaffed, police departments need additional tools to hold participants accountable. Until they get them, it is clear that this type of activity will continue and that residents will have to worry about where they are going when, and business will have to continue to wonder if tonight is the night no one shows up to their establishment or, worse yet, a meet up takes place and there is an injury or fatality on or near their place of business.

In summation, the Chamber wants all businesses to succeed. And we believe that this legislation will help assure a safe and welcoming environment for everyone, which is key to a thriving business community, a thriving Silver Spring, and a thriving Maryland. Safe for those who live here, who work here, and who come here to enjoy the wonderful amenities we have to offer, thus allowing Silver Spring to take its rightful place as a business and residential hub, and economic engine, in Maryland.

Should you have questions, don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Helsing
President & CEO

Takoma Park 2024 - HB 601 FAV - Street Racing - Ho

Uploaded by: Talisha Searcy

Position: FAV



CITY TAKOMA OF PARK MARYLAND

Support House Bill 601 - Street Racing and Exhibition Driving – Prohibited Acts, Enforcement, and Penalties

House Environment & Transportation Committee

February 15, 2024

The City of Takoma Park supports and urges favorable consideration of HB 601.

This bill alters penalties and points assessments for vehicle violations related to participation in a race or speed contest and prohibits a person from engaging in exhibition driving on any highway or private property that is used for driving by the public. This bill is critically important to advance public safety as the region faces an increase in illegal street races.

The City of Takoma Park is in a cross-jurisdictional area with borders along Washington, DC as well as Prince George's County and Montgomery County. State highways in the City, like New Hampshire Avenue, are major throughfare for thousands of cars daily connecting Maryland to Washington, DC. However, more importantly, it is a stretch of highway that is heavily traveled by pedestrians commuting between home and work or frequenting local businesses.

On Saturday February 11, 2024, a large crowd of onlookers gathered in the City to watch reckless drivers turn doughnuts and burnouts at the intersection of New Hampshire and Ethan Allen Avenues. The group had the intersection blocked. There were hundreds of cars. And, while our officers were able to eventually take control of the chaotic scene, people could have died.

The actors involved in this incident willingly violated several of Maryland's current traffic laws because there are few consequences for doing so. HB 601 goes a step further than current laws by requiring that persons convicted of a violation be subject to 60 days in jail, up to a \$1,000 fine, or both. Additionally, in cases in which where there is serious bodily injury to another person, the prison sentence increases such that the offender can receive up to 1 year jail time. As an additional deterrent, the bill not only holds drivers accountable but also people who participate in the race such as timekeepers or flagman.

We shouldn't wait until a person dies to act. Takoma Park urges a favorable report on HB 601 so that we can collectively keep our streets safe.

HB0601 Lervik.pdf

Uploaded by: Tanya Lervik

Position: FAV

Tanya K. Lervik
9112 49th Place
College Park, MD 20740

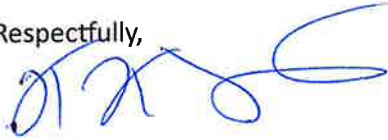
February 13, 2024

To: The Maryland General Assembly

Re: HB0601

I am writing to express my strong support for HB0601 (Street Racing and Exhibition Driving – Prohibited Acts, Enforcement, and Penalties). I have witnessed an overwhelming increase in aggressive and dangerous driving in recent years. Thousands of people are injured or even killed each year, but it seems little is being done to discourage and prevent this behavior. HB0601 is a step in the right direction.

Respectfully,



Tanya K. Lervik

HB 601 Street Racing and Exhibition Driving - Lett

Uploaded by: Tyahna Arnold

Position: FAV



February 15, 2024

Bill: House Bill 601 Street Racing and Exhibition Driving- Prohibited Acts, Enforcement, and Penalties

Position: Support

The City of Gaithersburg writes to support HB601- Street Racing and Exhibition Driving- Prohibited Acts, Enforcement, and Penalties. If enacted, this legislation would alter certain penalties and points assessments for certain motor vehicle violations related to participation in a race or speed contest; prohibiting a person from engaging in exhibition driving on any highway or private property that is used for driving by the public; and establishing certain affirmative defenses to a charge of exhibition driving. House Bill 601 will contribute to reducing accidents due to street racing often involving high speeds and reckless driving. House Bill 601 aims to reduce the frequency of racing-related crashes, which can result in serious injuries and fatalities.

We believe that this bill is a significant step toward ensuring the quality of life, not just in the city of Gaithersburg but for the entire state of Maryland. Street racing can negatively impact the quality of life for residents by causing excessive noise, disruptions, and unsafe and undesirable areas. If enacted this legislation will reduce accidents, life quality, and increase public safety. The intent of the bill is to address street racing by increasing penalties and adding provisions for “Exhibition Driving”, which provides police with another enforcement option when confronted with “street takeovers” that have occurred in the county, most recently in Silver Spring.

Enacting laws against street racing reinforces the principle that individuals are accountable for their actions on the road. House Bill 601 establishes a legal framework that holds those engaging in dangerous and illegal activities responsible for consequences of their behavior. By discouraging street racing, this legislation contributes to the overall efficiency of transportation systems, promoting safer and more predictable traffic conditions. Overall, enacting and enforcing House Bill 601 is a multifaceted approach to promoting public safety, deterring dangerous behaviors, and fostering a secure and orderly transportation environment for Maryland’s communities.

Therefore, we respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 601. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 301-466-5350 or our government relations consultant, Therese Hessler, at therese@ashlargr.com.

We appreciate your support.

Respectfully submitted,

Jud Ashman, Mayor
City of Gaithersburg

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Lisa Henderson
Yamil Hernández
Jim McNulty
Robert Wu

CITY MANAGER
Tanisha R. Briley