



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?

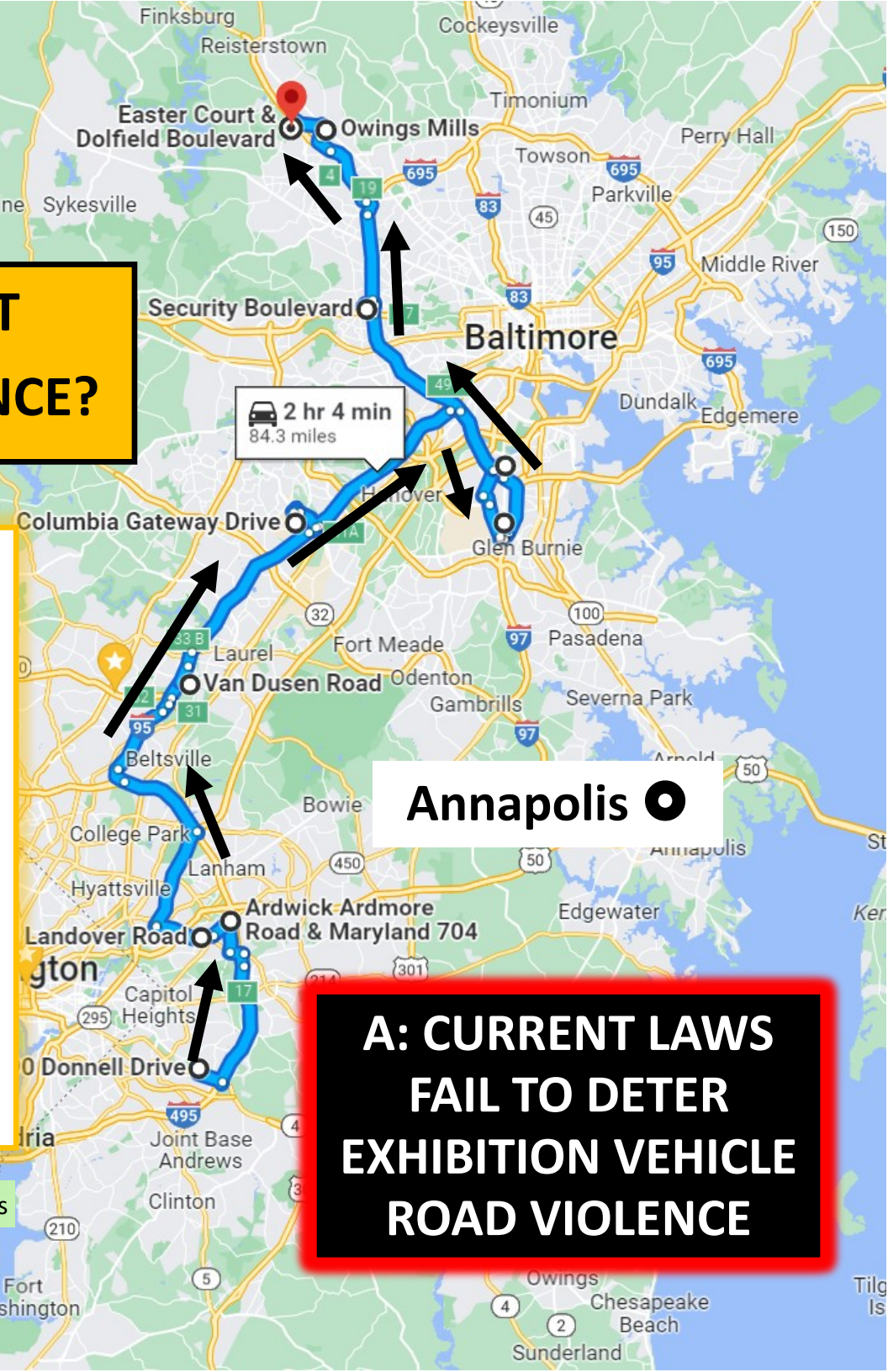
Maryland Roads Criminal Caravan Weekend

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