



**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.

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