



Maryland Chapter

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF
EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS

TO: The Honorable Marc Korman, Chair
Members, House Environment and Transportation Committee
The Honorable Mary A. Lehman

FROM: Danna L. Kauffman
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise

DATE: February 1, 2024

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 113 – *Vehicle Laws – Horse Riding – Helmet Requirement for Minors*

The Maryland Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians (MDACEP), which represents the interests of emergency physicians and their patients throughout the State of Maryland, **supports** House Bill 113.

House Bill 113 prohibits a minor from riding a horse unless the minor is wearing a helmet that meets or exceeds the standards of the American Society of Testing and Materials for protective headgear used in equestrian riding. The bill applies to riding a horse on (1) a highway; (2) a public horse-riding path; or (3) the grounds of a facility for which the primary purpose is recreational, educational, or competitive equestrian activities. The bill's requirements do not apply to a minor who is (1) crossing a public highway that separates privately owned land; (2) engaged in an agricultural practice or pursuit; or (3) a member of an Amish or a Mennonite community.

Riding a horse, even for skilled riders, carries an inherent risk, given the possibility of events occurring that are out of the control of the rider, such as the horse getting spooked and throwing the rider off. Wearing a helmet reduces the risk of head injuries as well as the risk of skull fracture, brain injury, and neck and spinal cord injuries. Helmets are also designed to reduce the risk of penetration by a sharp object when a fall occurs. House Bill 113 is a commonsense approach that only applies to minors. Maryland law already protects minors when riding a bicycle and the same policy should apply to minors when riding a horse. Therefore, MDACEP respectfully requests a favorable vote on House Bill 113.

For more information call:

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