



**AAA Mid-Atlantic's Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 939 - Criminal Law - Reckless Endangerment - Use of Motor Vehicle and Senate Bill 940 - Motor Vehicles - Allowing Unauthorized Use of a Motor Vehicle and Reckless, Negligent, and Aggressive Driving**

*Sponsor: Senator King*

- AAA Mid-Atlantic **supports** [Senate Bill 939 - Criminal Law - Reckless Endangerment - Use of Motor Vehicle](#) and [Senate Bill 940 - Motor Vehicles - Allowing Unauthorized Use of a Motor Vehicle and Reckless, Negligent, and Aggressive Driving](#).
- Both bills are intended to address the mayhem we are seeing on Maryland roadways that has led to death and serious injuries on our roadways, with little regard for public safety.
- The tragic incident in Montgomery County last fall, where Sergeant Patrick Kepp was critically injured, is one such example.
- SB 939 proposes to repeal current law, which prevents charges from being filed against a driver who engages in conduct that creates a substantial risk of death or serious physical injury, while using a motor vehicle.
- SB 940 is about accountability. It holds the owner of a vehicle responsible if that owner knowingly permits their vehicle to be driven by an unauthorized person who drives recklessly, negligently and/or aggressively and subjects the owner to a fine of up to \$1,000.
- According to the [Governor's Highway Safety Association \(GHSA\)](#), travel on U.S. roads rose in 2023, topping pre-COVID19 levels.
- As traffic volumes recovered, traffic fatalities on U.S. roads declined slightly, falling 4.5% in the first nine months of 2023, however, risky and dangerous driving behaviors persist nationwide and here, in Maryland.
- 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 3,220 injured persons on Maryland roads. An aggressive driver was the factor in 26 of the fatalities and 1,784 injured. (*Source: MDOT MVA Highway Safety Office, data as of February 27, 2024*).
- Last year, in Maryland, we saw a bigger uptick in traffic fatalities. Preliminary data by the [MD MVA's Highway Safety Office](#) indicate that 605 people died on Maryland roadways, with speed being a factor in 161 deaths and aggressive driving was a factor in 69 fatal crashes.
- The bottom line is—speed kills—and the blatant disregard for public safety that can be witnessed on our roadways on any given day is deadly and must be stopped.
- SB 940 increases penalties for reckless and negligent driving, and explicitly defines reckless driving as exceeding 90 mph.
- The bill also increases penalties for aggressive driving and expands the list of driving offenses that constitute aggressive driving, and reduces the number of said offenses required to constitute aggressive driving from three to two and requires the offender to appear in court.
- Over the years, we have seen countless cases where drivers involved in fatal or serious crashes in Maryland received a mere slap on the wrist, as their victims and lives of the families of victims are forever changed.
- Those who wish to disregard the rules of the road in a dangerous and deadly manner need to be held accountable, and SB 939 and SB 940 strive to do that. We respectfully urge the Committee to render **a favorable report for SB 939 and SB 940**.

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