

# Written Testimony in Support of SB 585

## Boating Accidents-Duty to Remain at the Scene

My name is Carolynn F. Grammas and I am an Assistant State’s Attorney in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. I write on behalf of victims in Anne Arundel County who have been directly impacted by the inadequacy of the State Boat Act – Boating Accidents.

On July 3, 2022, Laura Slattery and her husband, Brian Slattery, Sr. went out on their boat to watch the fireworks. As they were returning, they approached the mouth of the Magothy River when their boat was over ridden by another boat – crushing Laura Slattery. After Mr. Slattery pushed the boat off of his wife and off of his boat, he began to tend to his wounded wife and to make sure of the integrity of his vessel. The striking boat remained at the scene briefly but then fled without assisting the Slattery’s or providing any identifying information.

Mrs. Slattery died from her injuries. An extensive investigation was started to determine who struck and killed Mrs. Slattery and fled the scene. A team of investigators from Maryland Natural Resource Police put in a tremendous amount of time and resources to finding the vessel and the operator who killed Mrs. Slattery.

The intent of Senate Bill 585 is to bring the penalties for leaving the scene of boating accidents resulting in property damage, personal injury, serious physical injury or death in line with similar incidents involving vehicles on a highway.

Transportation Article §§20-102<sup>1</sup> et seq of the Annotated Code of Maryland are commonly known as the “Hit and Run” sections. The current penalties for the operator leaving the scene of a vehicle accident are listed below:

Accident Involving Damage to Attended Vehicle or Property.....2 mos./\$500  
Accident Involving Unattended Vehicle or Other Property.....2 mos./\$500  
Accident Involving Bodily Injury.....1 year/\$3,000

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<sup>1</sup> “The legislative intent of this section is to discourage drivers involved in injury causing accident from abandoning injured parties in need of medical care and from attempting to evade liability.” See *Comstock v. State*, 82 Md. App. 744, 573 A.2.d 117 (1990).

Accident Involving Serious Bodily Injury and Knew or Should Have Known there was

Serious Bodily Injury.....5 years/\$5,000  
Accident Involving Death.....5 years/\$5,000  
Accident Involving Death and Knew or Should Have Known Death Would Result..  
10 years/\$10,000

In contrast, the current penalties for leaving the scene of a boating accident involving the same scenarios as above are so miniscule as to be bordering on the unimaginable. Those penalties are:

Duty to Remain at Scene of Boating Accident.....1st Offense - \$500 fine  
2nd Offense - 1 yr/\$1,000

The inequity of these statutes became abundantly clear upon the death of Mrs. Slattery and the dissipation of evidence as the operator fled the scene of the boating accident. Senate Bill 585, if passed, would eliminate the inequity between the Duty to Remain at the Scene of a Boating Accident and a Vehicle Accident.

I strongly support Senate Bill 585 and urge a favorable report.

Respectfully Submitted,



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