

Support HB512 Vulnerable Road Users

Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis & Anne Arundel County P.O. Box 208, Arnold, MD 21012 <u>www.bikeaaa.org</u>

House Environment & Transportation Committee Annapolis, MD 21401-1991 March 4, 2020

RE: SUPPORT House Bill 721

Dear Chairman and Members of the Committee,

I am a resident of District 33, president of Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis and Anne Arundel County ("BikeAAA"), Chair of the Anne Arundel County Bicycle Advisory Commission, Member of the 2017 Maryland Bicycle Safety Task Force and avid Maryland cyclist for over 20 years. On behalf of BikeAAA and it's more than 900 members, I support House Bill 721. This bill will raise the duty of care for drivers when they encounter pedestrians, bicyclists, wheelchair users and other vulnerable road users lawfully using or crossing our roads. They key benefits of this law include:

- Deterrence for bad driver behaviors around vulnerable users.
- Fills gaps between ordinary traffic violations and more severe offenses, providing additional charging options to local law enforcement and prosecutors
- Allows stronger penalties in cases in serious injury or death
- Promotes public awareness of the threat posed by motor vehicles and the vulnerability of people outside of motor vehicles.

This was recommended by the Maryland Bicycle Safety Task Force and is based on a model law provided by the League of American Bicyclists. It also aligns with the goals of the Maryland Strategic Highway Safety Plan and Maryland's Vision Zero program. Nine other states have Vulnerable Road User laws and Virginia has just passed one through both chambers. Drivers of vehicles which are potentially lethal to lawful road users outside of vehicles should have greater awareness and face tougher penalties. In 2019, the House unanimously passed a substantially identical bill.

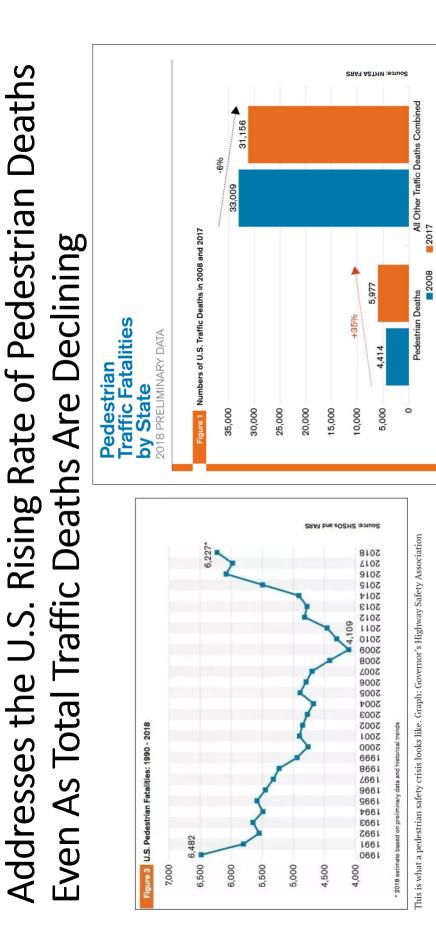
Safe biking and walking promote health, reduce traffic, improve the environment and stimulate economic growth for all Marylanders. This bill will advance safe, active transportation.

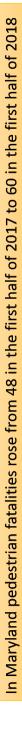
Sincerely,

Jon Korin President, Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis & Anne Arundel County

Tel: 443-685-4103

Attachments



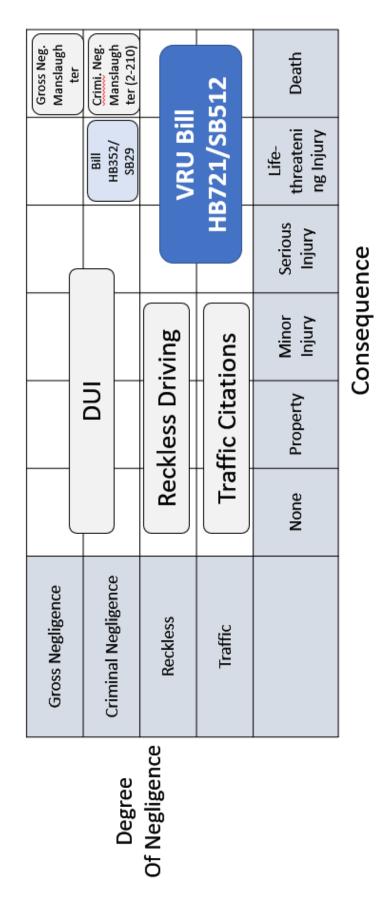


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Maryland had the 11th highest increase (25%) in pedestrian deaths from first half 2017 to 2018

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Vulnerable Road User Law Fills a Gap in our Traffic Laws By Raising the Penalties for Drivers Who Commit traffic offenses that result in death or serious injury of a vulnerable user*



*Similarly Bill HB352/SB29 fills a different gap by providing reduced penalties for criminal negligence resulting in lifethreatening injury vs. death as provided in existing law 2-210