

HB721 -- Vehicle Laws - Injury or Death of Vulnerable Road User –Penalties  
House Environment and Transportation Committee  
March 6, 2020  
Position: Support

The Prince George’s County Cycling Network is currently comprised of 7-Cycling Groups across Central and Southern Prince George’s County.

Currently there is a huge gap in current law if a driver seriously injures or kills a pedestrian or cyclist. They can write a check for as little as \$150 and be done with it.

HB721 -- Injury or Death of Vulnerable Road User – known to cyclists as the “Vulnerable Road User law” (VRU) will help to fill this gap, add a degree of fairness, and provide a catalyst for continuing education for drivers.

As stated by the League of American Bicyclists, Vulnerable Road User (VRU) Laws provide important legal protection to bicyclists and other persons who are not protected by steel cages. VRU laws operate on the principle of general deterrence – by providing an increased penalty for certain driver behaviors that lead to the serious injury or death of vulnerable road users people will be deterred from doing those behaviors around those users.

**A driver who kills or seriously injures a pedestrian, cyclist, or someone using a mobility device should receive more than just a small traffic fine.**

Vulnerable road users are all of us — walkers, cyclists, wheelchair users, children on training wheels, a parent pushing a stroller, or someone with a disability. These users don’t have the safety protections that a vehicle affords and are therefore especially vulnerable to death or serious injury when struck by a car.

HB721 will provide increased protection for vulnerable road users by providing a continual reminder to drivers to take extra care when encountering pedestrians, cyclists, and people using mobility devices. And, when they fail to take this extra care, providing a meaningful, effective punishment.

We urge a favorable report on HB721