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**BILL NO.:**           **HB 721**

**TITLE:**             Vehicle Laws – Injury or Death of Vulnerable Individual – Penalties

**SPONSOR:**         Delegate Stein

**COMMITTEE:**      Environment and Transportation

**POSITION:**       **SUPPORT**

**DATE:**             March 6, 2020

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 721 – Vehicle Laws – Injury or Death of Vulnerable Individual – Penalties. This legislation would establish specific penalties for an individual causing the serious physical injury or death of a vulnerable individual through distracted driving.

In 2019, the Maryland Highway Safety Office reported that distracted driving contributed to 58% of all crashes in the State. Baltimore County is home to a number of high-congestion highways, meaning that distracted driving has an even greater impact here.

HB 721 seeks to address this problem by creating a new civil penalty in vehicle laws that specifically addresses the consequences of careless or distracted driving. Holding distracted drivers accountable for the damage that is done to pedestrians, highway work crews, and emergency service providers will lead to a safer Maryland. Baltimore County considers safety of our public safety personnel a critical issue of concern, and therefore considers this a high priority piece of legislation.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 721. For more information, please contact Chuck Conner, Chief Legislative Officer, at 443-900-6582.