



EMERGENCY NURSES  
ASSOCIATION

**Maryland State Council**

**Safe Practice Safe Care**

To: Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee 2018  
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East Wing  
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401 - 1991

Chair [will.smith@senate.state.md.us](mailto:will.smith@senate.state.md.us)

Vice-Chair [jeff.waldstreicher@senate.state.md.us](mailto:jeff.waldstreicher@senate.state.md.us)

[jill.carter@senate.state.md.us](mailto:jill.carter@senate.state.md.us)

[bob.cassilly@senate.state.md.us](mailto:bob.cassilly@senate.state.md.us)

[michael.hough@senate.state.md.us](mailto:michael.hough@senate.state.md.us)

[susan.lee@senate.state.md.us](mailto:susan.lee@senate.state.md.us)

[justin.ready@senate.state.md.us](mailto:justin.ready@senate.state.md.us)

[charles.sydnor@senate.state.md.us](mailto:charles.sydnor@senate.state.md.us)

[chris.west@senate.state.md.us](mailto:chris.west@senate.state.md.us)

[ronald.young@senate.state.md.us](mailto:ronald.young@senate.state.md.us)

From: Maryland State Council of the Emergency Nurses Association

Date: February 3, 2020

Re: Maryland Emergency Nurses Association requests an **UNFAVORABLE** vote on SB 237  
written and oral testimony

Dear Chair Smith and members of the Maryland State Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee,

The Maryland State Council of the Emergency Nurses Association opposes Senate Bill (SB) 237, legislation that would repeal Maryland's "all-riders" motorcycle helmet law, and provide for exceptions: **SB 237 - Vehicle Laws – Protective Headgear Requirement for Motorcycle Riders – Exception**

Please consider these 8 facts:

1. Motorcycles are the most hazardous form of motor vehicle transportation. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), motorcycle helmet use is the most effective way to prevent motorcycle crash fatalities and their associated injuries.
2. According to a report by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), laws requiring all motorcyclists to wear helmets are the only strategy proven to be effective in reducing motorcyclist fatalities.
3. Helmets have been preventing deaths and traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) of Maryland's motorcycle riders for over 26 years. The NHTSA estimates that Maryland's helmet law prevented 41 fatalities in 2015 alone.
4. Helmets have been saving the Maryland taxpayers money for over 26 years by eliminating the costs associated with long term healthcare treatments for victims of TBI and other disabilities. The NHTSA estimates that Maryland's helmet law saved over \$538 million in comprehensive costs associated with motorcycle crashes in 2015 alone.
5. Helmets have reduced the suffering of Maryland's motorcycle riders and their families from the nightmare of trying to recover from a TBI. News coverage of American Veterans and football players with TBIs has allowed the public to have an up close and personal view of the hardships and struggles these patients have in learning to speak, comprehend, eat, bathe, toilet, walk, move and work again. Some never recover.
6. "Minors only" helmet laws, such as SB 237, have been shown to be ineffective. According to a study published in the American Association of Pediatrics journal, youths had a 38% higher rate of TBIs in states with "age-specific" laws compared to states with "all-rider" helmet laws.
7. "Minors only" helmet laws, such as SB 237, have been shown to be difficult to enforce. Enforcing the youth exception may prove to be a difficult task for Maryland's law enforcement officers because it can be hard to tell the age of a person. As nurses, we have cared for 25 year old men who look like 16 year olds, and 12 year olds who look like grown men. Although unfounded, another risk of allowing an exception to the "all rider" motorcycle helmet law is that some Maryland citizen groups have become quite sensitive and vocal about their perceptions of being "targeted" by law enforcement. Having the law cover "all riders" eliminates that young riders, many of voting age, will feel targeted. Everyone must wear a helmet. Period.
8. If the "all riders" motorcycle helmet law was repealed it would contradict the motorcycle rider safety course curriculums taught in Maryland. According to our own

Karen Vogel, an ER nurse from Hagerstown who is also a licensed Maryland motorcycle owner and operator, when she took her motorcycle rider safety course at the Harley-Davidson dealership in Frederick, helmet use was emphasized as paramount throughout the course.

Maryland Emergency Nurses are on the front line of caring for patients who die in motorcycle crashes. We are the ones who save the lives of those who survive their crashes, only to live with TBIs and other devastating injuries. We, like you, want the citizens of Maryland who ride motorcycles to be as safe as possible. We see no benefit to repealing Maryland's current "all riders" motorcycle helmet law. It is unwise to alter an injury prevention law that has saved lives, reduced disability and saved money for the State of Maryland and her citizens for the past 26 years. Changing this law would be a deadly and costly mistake.

Sincerely,

Margo Mancl

*Margo E. Mancl*

Margo E. Mancl, MS, RN, CPEN  
Member, Government Affairs Committee  
Maryland State Council of Emergency Nurses Association

*Lisa Tenney*

Lisa Tenney, BSN, RN, CEN, CPHRM  
Chair, Government Affairs Committee

*Barbara Maliszewski*

Barbara Maliszewski, MS, RN, NEA-BC  
President  
Maryland State Council Emergency Nurses Association  
P.O. Box 7994  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878  
[www.MDNA.org](http://www.MDNA.org)

Margo Mancl  
20 Chesthill Ct.  
Nottingham, MD 21236  
[mmancl1@jhmi.edu](mailto:mmancl1@jhmi.edu)  
410-206-8097