

January 21, 2020

To: The Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chair
House Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Workgroup on Statewide Vehicle Crash Data Collection and Reporting (HB 285)
Position: Support

Dear Chairman Barve and Committee Members:

I support HB 285, Workgroup on Statewide Vehicle Crash Data Collection and Reporting.

I am a transportation engineer and I live in the 43rd District in Baltimore City. I work to improve safety for people traveling in Maryland, but more change is needed. In the past five years the number of traffic crashes has trended upward in Maryland, which averaged 115,553 crashes, 33,391 injuries, and 492 fatalities annually.¹ Nationally 36,560 people were killed in traffic crashes in 2018.²

The MVA explains that: “crash data are an essential component in identifying and defining roadway safety problems, developing countermeasures to alleviate those problems, guiding the implementation of those measures, and evaluating their effectiveness. When properly understood, analyzed and used, crash data are a powerful asset to any highway safety program.”³

Unfortunately, Maryland’s traffic crash statistics are missing vital data points: race and ethnicity. This means transportation and public health practitioners in Maryland are unable to “evaluate motor vehicle traffic fatalities by race and ethnicity”, as recommended by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).⁴ Assessing specific demographic groups helps determine whether road safety measures are reducing the risk of death and injury. For example, when crash data is isolated by age we can assess the rates at which children and the elderly are involved in crashes.

This bill convenes a workgroup of key agencies and experts to determine how Maryland can include race and ethnicity in crash data. Therefore, I ask that the committee moves this bill favorably.

Sincerely,



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¹ MVA Statewide Crash Summary <https://mva.maryland.gov/safety/Pages/mhso/benchmark-reports.aspx>

² NHTSA 2018 Fatal Motor Vehicle Crashes www.nhtsa.gov/traffic-deaths-2018

³ MVA Highway Safety Data <https://mva.maryland.gov/safety/Pages/mhso/maryland-traffic-safety-data.aspx>

⁴ NHTSA 2006 Data Race and Ethnicity <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/810995>