



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 23, 2021

To: The Honorable William C. Smith Jr., Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Re: Letter of Concern - Senate Bill 712 - Vehicle Laws - Protective Headgear Requirement for Motorcycle Riders - Exception

Dear Chair Smith:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 712.

This legislation changes Maryland's all-rider motorcycle helmet law to exempt motorcyclists who are 21 years or older, licensed for at least two years, complete a safety course, or for passengers with riders who meet these criteria.

No matter how experienced or cautious riders may be, motorcycle accidents still occur. The Maryland Motor Vehicle Association reports an average of 1,521 crashes each year between 2013-2017. In 2014, 1,186 people were injured and 66 were killed.¹ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports helmets reduce risk of head injury by 69% and lower risk of death by 37%.² Relaxing safety standards for any group of riders increases the potential for head injuries and even death—putting added pressure on hospitals and raising costs related to care.

Motorcycle crashes often result in fatalities or long-term medical problems due to traumatic injuries. Total medical costs for accidents involving non-helmeted motorcyclists were 66% more than for those motorcyclists who wore helmets.³ Disability resulting from motorcycle crashes can require extensive and expensive medical care, putting additional strain on Maryland hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, outpatient resources, and other facilities.

Maryland's law requiring all riders to wear helmets saves lives and should remain in place to protect our state's motorcyclists and their passengers.

For these reasons, we urge an *unfavorable* report on SB 712.

For more information, please contact:
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¹ Maryland Motor Vehicle Association. (2018). [Motorcycle Safety in Maryland](#).

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2017). [Motorcycle Safety](#)

³ Journal of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery. (2015). [National mandatory motorcycle helmet laws may save \\$2.2 billion annually: An inpatient and value of statistical life analysis](#)