

SB0075_FAV_Cymet.pdf

Uploaded by: Cymet, Tyler

Position: FAV

Dr. Tyler Cymet

**Chief of Clinical Education, American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine,
presenting as an individual and not representing the viewpoint of any organization.**

Testimony in Support of [SB0075_FAV_Cymet](#)

Drivers' Licenses-Older Licensees – In-Person Renewal

Driving is a critical risk for older people and those they come in contact with.

After 35 years of age, our bodies change, our abilities change, and so do the risks that these changes create for ourselves and those we come in contact with.

The body is built to last 95 years. But between the ages of 50 and 70 most people lose about 1/3 of their muscle strength, and from 70-80 they lose another 30%.

Loss of muscle mass, slowed reflexes, and visual deterioration all figure into driving risk for older adults.

Doctors know that by 45 years of age most people have trouble standing on their non-dominant leg for 30 seconds (the “one leg stand test”), and by 55 years, a majority of adults lose the ability to support and swing their hips. (Doctors do the “duck walk test” to see if this ability is affected in people.) It is possible to stave off the effects of aging with exercise, practice, focus and working at it. That is until people enter their 80's. After 80, it will clearly become an issue.

Doctors also see that along with these functional deficiencies comes fear of losing independence. Changes from aging that last more than 3 years are no longer reversible. And, we also see that admitting these deficiencies becomes harder with aging.

It does seem that this information could lead one to conclude that testing to assess skills loss might be needed. But, the data we have at present show that asking people to demonstrate where they are in their abilities by just presenting themselves is often enough to cause people to confront body changes that they are likely aware of, but are not ones they want to admit or risk having noted by others.

The bill by Delegate Dana Stein addresses the issue in a way that provides the control to the person requesting the privilege of driving. It should be enough. I am thankful to Delegate Stein for addressing the issue and hope the medical information shared helps you understand the scientific reasoning for the sound legislation proposed. I urge a favorable vote on this bill.

SB75_FAV_Hettleman.pdf

Uploaded by: Hettleman, Shelly

Position: FAV



The Senate of Maryland
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TESTIMONY OF SENATOR SHELLY HETTLEMAN
SB 75 – Driver's Licenses - Older Licensees - In-Person Renewal

I'm introducing this bill in response to a tragedy that befell my constituents, the Friedman family, who lost a family member in 2019 to the poor driving of an elderly motorist. You will hear more about what happened shortly.

Senate Bill 75 would implement a requirement that drivers age 85 and above should renew their driver's license in person for each renewal. MVA's most recent statistics on crashes involving drivers age 65 and older shows that between 2015 and 2019, the total number of crashes went up by 24%, from 12,736 to 15,795. While the number of fatal crashes remained about the same, the number of injuries went up by 19%, from 4,936 to 5,886.

Several states have implemented measures to try to ensure that older drivers have the ability to drive safely. For example, a dozen states require more frequent license renewal for older drivers.

In Maryland, older drivers aren't required to renew their license more frequently. Just like everyone, older drivers renew their licenses every eight years and have the option of renewing by mail every other renewal. With regard to vision testing, everyone over 40 has to pass a vision test or provide proof when renewing via mail.

One measure that some states have implemented to ensure the ability to drive has not diminished with age is a requirement that older drivers renew in person for each renewal, removing the mail-in option. There are 13 states that have this requirement, including Virginia, California, Texas, Georgia and Illinois.

Research has indicated that this in-person requirement is effective. The Journal of the American Medical Association found in a 2004 study that of these different measures – in-person renewal requirements, more frequent renewals, vision tests, road tests – the in-person renewal requirement actually has an impact in reducing elderly driver fatalities. *It reduces fatalities by 17%.* [1]

The study didn't identify the reasons by which in-person license renewal is related to a reduced fatality rate among elderly drivers. But the authors had a couple of theories, one of which is that "potentially unsafe older drivers may be less likely to re-apply for a license when facing in-person renewal. That is, potentially unsafe older adults may recognize the low likelihood of re-licensure and forego the license renewal process altogether." [2]

This bill was introduced in the House last year and passed 130-0. Unfortunately, it couldn't be considered by this committee because we adjourned early. Respectfully, I ask for your favorable consideration of Senate Bill 75. Thank you.

[1] "Elderly Licensure Laws and Motor Vehicle Fatalities," JAMA, June 16, 2004 – Vol. 191, No. 23, 2840-2846.

[2] JAMA Article at 2844.

SB0075_FAV_Poliakoff1.pdf

Uploaded by: Poliakoff, Bracha

Position: FAV

Testimony from Bracha Poliakoff:

While it was my mom's untimely death that inspired our advocacy in this area, this is about way more than my mother. As a geriatric social worker, I see how difficult it is for seniors to give up their independence - sometimes in multiple areas of their lives - and I see the grief they feel when they do. However, sometimes the values of science and safety must outweigh the value of independence. The law we are proposing today is not at all radical. It is just bringing our state up to the standard that many other states have had for a while. My colleague at Lifebridge Health, Jan Crye, an OT with 42 years of experience, wrote up some of her thoughts on this issue based on her unique experience as a certified driving rehabilitation specialist and as a person who is very familiar with the multiple sides of this issue and has evaluated the driving of over 7000 individuals.

I would like you to especially pay attention to the middle paragraph, where Jan writes:

According to the Governors Highway Safety Administration, impairments in three key areas—vision, cognition and motor function—are responsible for higher crash rates for older drivers. Vision declines with age; cognition, which includes memory and attention, can be impacted by medical problems such as dementia and medication side effects; and motor function suffers as flexibility declines due to diseases such as arthritis. There often is a variety of other common healthcare issues such as diabetes, strokes, cardiac problems. Many states routinely attempt to identify, assess and regulate older drivers with diminishing abilities who cannot or will not voluntarily modify their driving habits. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, 18 states require older drivers to renew their drivers licenses more often than the rest of the state's residents. In addition, 18 states require more frequent vision tests for older motorists. Sixteen states and the District of Columbia prohibit older drivers from renewing licenses by mail or online. One state, Illinois, requires older drivers age 75 and over to take a road test at renewal and the District of Columbia requires a doctor's approval for drivers over the age of 70 to renew their licenses.

Thank you for considering this legislation. May our mother's memory be a blessing.

SB0075_FAV_Poliakoff2.pdf

Uploaded by: Poliakoff, Bracha

Position: FAV

I have been asked to address my opinions regarding the issue of senior driving and the role of the Maryland MVA in improving the screening of potential age related driving concerns. My career background is that I am an occupational therapist with 42 years of experience. I am also a certified driving rehabilitation specialist with 27 years of full time work, evaluating individuals with any type of medical issue to determine driving safety. The diagnoses are varied from dementia, strokes, diabetes, parkinson's disease, and often "senior driving concerns". The majority of my clients are 75 years and older. My evaluation of each pt involves a clinic assessment which various tests are administered to assess vision, cognition, motor function, reaction time, the ability to rapidly process information. The second part of the assessment is a behind the wheel evaluation where a 15- 20 mile road assessment is performed. Often families and health care professionals contact our department to set up appointments for a professional driving evaluation due to safety concerns in this age range. Statistics do indicate that as we age often many of the vital skills required to drive are changing.

According to the Governors Highway Safety Administration, impairments in three key areas—vision, cognition and motor function—are responsible for higher crash rates for older drivers. Vision declines with age; cognition, which includes memory and attention, can be impacted by medical problems such as dementia and medication side effects; and motor function suffers as flexibility declines due to diseases such as arthritis. There often is a variety of other common healthcare issues such as diabetes, strokes, cardiac problems. Many states routinely attempt to identify, assess and regulate older drivers with diminishing abilities who cannot or will not voluntarily modify their driving habits. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, 18 states require older drivers to renew their drivers licenses more often than the rest of the state's residents. In addition, 18 states require more frequent vision tests for older motorists. Sixteen states and the District of Columbia prohibit older drivers from renewing licenses by mail or online. One state, Illinois, requires older drivers age 75 and over to take a road test at renewal and the District of Columbia requires a doctor's approval for drivers over the age of 70 to renew their licenses.

Although I do personally do not judge a person's driving capability on age, there is frequently a direct correlation on a person's aging functional changes and their safe driving skills. From my many years of working in driving evaluation, I can personally attest that there are frequently serious problems observed in the clinic and the road portion of the driving evaluation process with driver's in the 80+ age range. It is the responsibility of the Motor Vehicle Administration to attempt to monitor driver's and their potential harm to the general population. My personal experience is that most drivers go unmonitored by their doctors, the individual's personal insight regarding their skills is poor, and families have a very difficult time becoming involved in the issue. Maryland's renewal time frame, which could be up to 8 years, is not capturing the potential unsafe drivers in the age range where many changes occur. Frequent personal face to face renewal, where potential problems could be identified, or a brief physician "physical" review (like the one's that eye Dr submit for vision) would certainly help to capture drivers who are at risk. I would certainly see this as a measure to save lives- the individual, their passengers, and innocent others who are at the effect of an accident/incident. This legislation has been a long time coming to attempt to screen, in some manner the "at risk" senior driver.

Jan Crye OTR/L CDRS Sinai Rehabilitation Center 410-601-7363 jcrye@lifebridgehealth.org

SB 75 Driver's Licenses - Older Licensees - In-Per

Uploaded by: Bresnahan, Tammy

Position: INFO



200 St. Paul Place, #2510 | Baltimore, MD 21202
1-866-542-8163 | Fax: 410-895-0269 | TTY: 1-877-434-7598
aarp.org/md | mdaarp@aarp.org | twitter: @aarpmaryland
facebook.com/aarpmid

SB 75 Driver's Licenses - Older Licensees - In-Person Renewal
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Letter of Information
January 27th, 2021

Good Afternoon Chairman Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee. I am Tammy Bresnahan the Director of Advocacy for AARP MD. AARP MD represents over 850,000 members statewide.

SB 75 prohibits the Motor Vehicle Administration from renewing the driver's license of an individual who is at least 85 years old without requiring the individual to complete the renewal transaction in person.

While AARP MD is not taking a formal position on this bill, we are offering the following as information for the Committee when deliberating this bill.

People age 50 and older make nearly 90 percent of their local trips by private vehicle. The vast majority of them hold a driver's license. Older road users are overrepresented in both vehicle and pedestrian crash fatalities in large part because of their increased fragility and frailty. One reason older people are reliant on driving is that they live in communities in which driving is required. Residential housing is located far from grocery stores, medical offices, and other community features. But often no public transportation options are available.

States including Maryland have measures in place to identify at-risk or unsafe drivers of all ages. These measures include regular vision testing or self-reporting of medical conditions. Additional testing may be required before they are offered or allowed to renew a driver's license. Maryland allows health professionals, law enforcement officials, friends, and family members to refer potentially unsafe drivers to the Motor Vehicle Administration. In addition, motor vehicle department personnel are trained to identify individuals who may need further testing.

Driving ability varies greatly at any given age. It is more appropriate to assess ALL drivers' ability to be safe on the road, rather than using the age as a factor.

AARP MD believes that policymakers can also promote safe driving through other mechanisms. These include speed management and measures to reduce distracted driving. We also suggest that older drivers if there is a problem should receive

Real Possibilities

counseling or referrals as required by current law, and appropriate action should be taken. This includes issuing licenses tailored to the individual based on road test results.

Thank you for allowing us to submit this letter of information on SB 75. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Tammy Bresnahan at tbresnahan@arp.org or by calling 410-302-8451.