

**SenateBill0337Jan2021.pdf**

Uploaded by: Henry, Kenniss

Position: FAV

**SB0337 “Vehicle Laws – Reckless Driving Excessive Speed” Senate Committee: Judicial Proceedings Committee, Hearing Date, 27 January 2021**

**Position: Support SB0337**

January 24, 2021

Kenniss O. Henry  
Retired  
[hkenniss@hotmail.com](mailto:hkenniss@hotmail.com)  
240-271-2915

Re:

**Support - SB0337 “Vehicle Laws – Reckless Driving Excessive Speed”**

**Cross-Filed with HB 0178 – “Reckless Driving, Speed Contests, Registration Plates, and Noise Abatement Penalties:” House Committee: Environment and Transportation Committee**

**Dear Honorable Chairman William C. Smith Jr. and Members of the Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

**My name is Kenniss Henry and I am the Mother of Natasha Pettigrew, who in the fall of 2010 when was tragically killed by a drunk driver. I rise in support of SB0337 and its companion HB 0178.**

**The Problem**

**Ten years ago, I stood before this very committee pleading for stronger vehicular manslaughter laws. Laws that would send a clear message to potential perpetrators however it is evident that even stronger legislation must be passed into law. Ten years and I am still grieving because a drunk driver felt entitled to abuse the resources of the road and further, deemed that there should be no penalties for her reckless driving and the reckless endangerment of lives. Sadly, the statistics have not improved drastically as is evident by the following:**

- **“Maryland has averaged more than 500 traffic fatalities annually over the past five years, despite, reduced traffic volume for the past near year. (Source: Chrissy Nizer, Administrator MD MVA)**
- **Maryland suffered 568 road deaths in 2020, compared to 535 in 2019, over fewer miles driven. 2020 fatalities increased 6% and crashes increased 9% compared to 2019. (Maryland Highway Safety Office)**
- **Prince George County suffered 470 deaths during the five-year period of 2014 – 2018. (Source: Maryland Highway Safety Office and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)**

**Current Maryland transportation laws require commitments for additional overhauls, strengthening and enforcement. Commitments that are two-prongs as greater support and revenues must be allocated for public awareness and education. On a personal note, imagine that you just hugged and kissed your child and 2 hours later you are racing up a hospital corridor only to learn that your child will die before sunset or forever be a human vegetable. One so full of life, how could this be**

**happening. Imagine my horror when I discovered the driver could get a \$100 fine and a couple of points yet she hit and left the scene, drove 4.5 miles to her house, dragging my daughter's bicycle all the way. My journey not just mine but all those who walk in my shoes because of the sense of entitlement that far too many motorists possess when they get behind the wheel.**

**Next Steps –**

- 1. Advocate for the implementation of stronger legislation signed into law.**
- 2. Enforce the laws on the books.**
- 3. Ensure that staff and employees get adequate training. Use them as ambassadors for your messages.**
- 4. Commit to rolling out public awareness campaigns and education to include high school driver education.**
- 5. Make the penalties for failure to comply more severe, ie., failure to show for court appearance comes with 250 hours of mandatory community service, failure to complete community service will result in 10 days in jail. For second occurrence, the 250 community service hours will be 500 added onto the outstanding hours from the prior incident and if not met then 30 days in jail. Certainly, I recognize that any such recommendations must be legislated however the intent is introduce penalties that make the perpetrator want to appear in court.**

**Thank you for this opportunity to speak before this body...**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Kenniss Henry**

# **2021 SB337 reckless driving excessive speeding KVS**

Uploaded by: sawyer, ken

Position: FAV



# ABATE OF MARYLAND, INC.

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*Dedicated to the Freedom of the Road and Responsible Motorcycle Legislation*

## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr. Chairman and Members of the  
Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Executive Director, Kenneth V. Sawyer, Abate of Maryland, Inc.

DATE: January 25, 2021

RE: **SB337 – Vehicle Laws – Reckless Driving – Excessive  
Speeding**

POSITION: **FAVORABLE**

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Abate of Maryland, Inc. is for making sure our public roads are as safe as possible and, as the voice of motorcyclists throughout the state of Maryland, we are in favor SB337.

The proposed amendments to this bill include 1) adding that speeding in excess of 20 MPH over the speed limit is considered reckless driving and, 2) that persons charged with reckless driving may not prepay a fine but must appear in Court to answer for their conduct.

We believe that requiring a court appearance for persons charged with driving recklessly, including those speeding more than 20 MPH over the speed limit, would deter motorists from this behavior. Simply paying a fine without further thought is often not strong enough to alter this unsafe driving. The inconvenience of missing employment to attend court, the potential expense of hiring a lawyer, and the discomfort of being confronted with their actions in a court of law would likely get the attention of many motorists who simply do not see this driving for the danger that it presents to all that travel the roads.

We request a favorable report of SB337.

Kenneth V. Sawyer, Executive Director  
Abate of Maryland, Inc.

# **Maryland Coalition For Highway Safety - MGA Senate**

Uploaded by: Seng, John

Position: FAV



## **MARYLAND COALITION FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY**

Testimony to Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

### **SB 0337 - SUPPORT**

CROSSFILED WITH HB 0494/HB 0178 - SUPPORT

January 27, 2021

John J. Seng, Director  
*Maryland Coalition For Highway Safety*  
JohnJSeng@gmail (202) 468-7682  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/marylandcoalitionhighwaysafety>

**Re: Please SUPPORT SB 0337 “Vehicle Laws - Reckless Driving - Excessive Speeding” Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, Hearing Date: 27 January 2021**

Dear Chairman William C. Smith, Jr. and Members of the Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee:

My name is John Seng, volunteer director and founder of the *Maryland Coalition For Highway Safety*. Our 125-member organization supports all provisions in SB 0337, sponsored by Senator Ben Kramer, and crossfiled with HB 0178/HB 0494.

*The Maryland Coalition For Highway Safety’s* founding organizations include the American Automobile Association (AAA) Mid-Atlantic, the Greater Olney Civic Association, The Tantallon Citizens Association in Prince George’s County and a group of Maryland home owner associations.

#### **The Problem**

We are, quite frankly, fed up with excessive, dangerous speeding on Maryland highways and other roads. Many people continue to die on Maryland roads, and the fatality statistics are heading in the wrong direction. We are bombarded by excruciatingly loud vehicles of all kinds throughout the day and night that we associate with excessive speed and reckless driving.

- **“Maryland has averaged more than 500 traffic fatalities annually over the past five years, and despite reduced traffic volumes during the past six months due to the COVID-19 emergency, fatalities on our roadways have increased compared to 2019.”** (source: Chrissy Nizer, Administrator, MD MVA)
- **Maryland suffered 568 road deaths in 2020, compared to 535 in 2019, over fewer miles driven.** 2020 fatalities increased 6%, crashes increased 9% compared to 2019. (Maryland Highway Safety Office)

- Montgomery County Fatalities Increased 34% in 2020 Over Previous 4-Year Average.

## PRELIMINARY 2020 CRASH TOTALS

ALL CRASHES	2019	2016 – 2019 Avg.	2020 Prelim.	% Change
Cyclists	120	133	144	+8%
Drivers / Passengers	11,042	11,315	7,524	-34%
Pedestrians	500	485	357	-26%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11,662</b>	<b>11,933</b>	<b>8,025</b>	<b>-33%</b>

FATAL CRASHES	2019	2016 – 2019 Avg.	2020 Prelim.	% Change
Cyclists	1	1	1	N/A
Drivers / Passengers	18	16	22	+38%
Pedestrians	13	12	16	+33%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>+34%</b>

NOTES:  

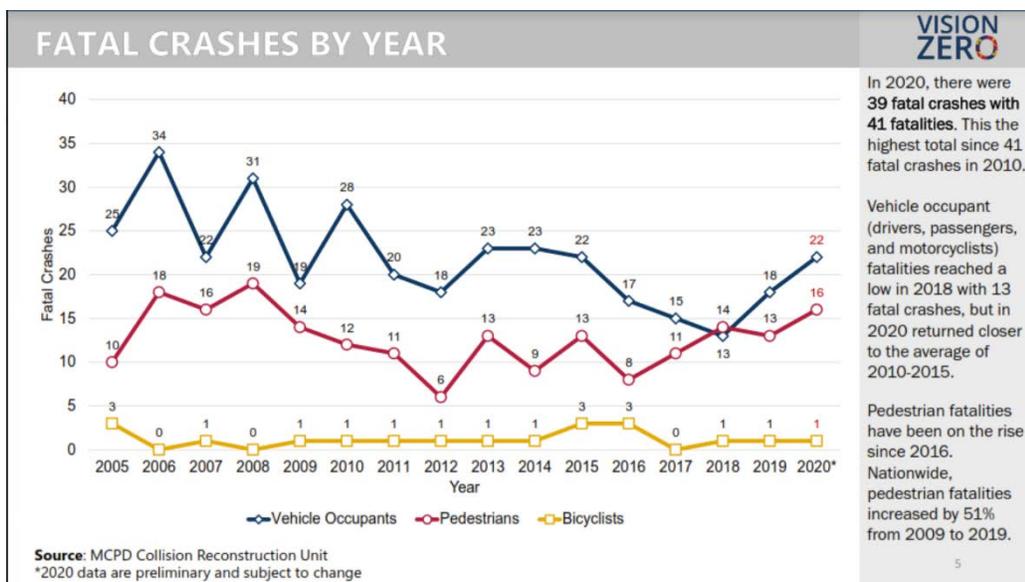
- Red Text = The number is preliminary and subject to change. 2020 cases are still being closed out.
- Includes reports from MCPD, RCPD, GCPD, M-NCPPC Police, and TPPD.
- % change = change from 2020 compared to the 2016-2019 average.

With the pandemic reducing the number of vehicles on the road, the overall number of crashes in 2020 dropped by a third compared to the prior 4-year average. Collisions between motor vehicles and people on bikes saw a slight increase.

For those still on the road and involved in a crash, there was a notable increase in speeding, impaired, and unbuckled drivers. The increase in risky behavior was observed nationwide. As a result, fatalities were up 34% in Montgomery County compared to the prior 4-year average and projected to increase nationwide in 2020.

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- Road Fatalities Hit A 10-Year High Total Montgomery County.



**Current Maryland transportation laws are too weak, and fail to deter speeding, reckless driving and other illegal behaviors.** That's what *The Maryland Coalition For Highway Safety* has learned in working with elected officials and Maryland highway safety experts. Extreme sporting seems on a dangerous rise on many major and local roads through our communities and near our homes. Too often, speeds exceed 100mph with jet aircraft decibel noise. And across the board, average speeds by drivers creep up, creating safety hazards that risk lives or serious injuries to innocent parties. Often, alcohol and other abused substances further cloud vehicle operator judgment.

### Taking Positive Steps

The Coalition has adopted a multi-faceted approach to propose methods to deter excessive, dangerous speed and noise. There is no one size fits all solution. But we must start with much stronger deterrents to violating Maryland road laws.

## **Make Speeders Tell It To The Judge**

In particular, we must emphasize that the mandatory court appearance provision in both the Senate and House bills adds a significant, critical deterrence for individuals who could otherwise still easily, instantly pay even higher penalties, but continue to speed in total disregard for public safety and wellbeing. We don't deny that Maryland courts are currently overwhelmed, but believe that the wheels of justice turning at any speed is worth the benefit. Decision-makers should seek other remedies to alleviate congestion in the legal system. In the meantime, let the specter of a court appearance hang over the heads of drivers who simply pay their fines but selfishly continue their lack of respect for road safety and your constituents.

Putting more teeth into current laws offers a major step in the right direction. The passage of SB 0337 in conjunction with HB 0178 presents real potential to save lives in Maryland.

We thank you and the Committee for your review of our concerns. We urge you to submit a favorable report on SB 0337.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John J. Seng". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being the most prominent.

John J. Seng  
Director

# **SB337 - Vehicle Laws-Reckless Driving-Excessive Sp**

Uploaded by: Tulkin, Josh

Position: FAV



7338 Baltimore Ave  
Suite 102  
College Park, MD 20740

**Committee: Judicial Proceedings**

**Testimony on: SB337 - “Vehicle Laws –Reckless Driving – Excessive Speeding”**

**Position: Support**

**Hearing Date: January 27, 2021**

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club supports SB337, which would establish that a person who drives at a speed of 20 miles per hour or more in excess of the maximum speed limit is guilty of reckless driving.

Transportation is now the primary contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in our state. Tailpipe emissions from cars and trucks are also a major source of health-damaging air pollution. This means there is growing need to get individuals out of their cars, taking transit, riding bikes and walking more. However, it’s quite difficult to make this happen near roads where drivers may be speeding, particularly if they are greatly exceeding the maximum speed limit.

We live in a car-centric culture where transportation planning, road infrastructure and vehicle laws are largely focused on enabling vehicles to get to their destination as swiftly as possible. Unfortunately, this has resulted in some drivers feeling they have priority on the road, and there are high rates of injury and death for bicyclists and pedestrians as well as vehicle drivers and passengers. Research shows that a vehicle’s rate of speed has a direct impact on the ability to see ahead and notice people in or near the roadway, how quickly one can respond to avoid potential problems, how long it takes to stop a vehicle, and how likely someone will die as a result of a car accident. Clearly, there is an understandable need to control speeding on our roads, and limiting excessive speeding is even more important

This bill could help bring about needed change. Any person convicted of reckless driving would have to appear in court, may not prepay the fine, and if convicted, is subject to a fine not exceeding \$1,000. These tougher penalties would help discourage excessive speeding and make our roads safer for everyone, especially bikers and pedestrians.

In summary, this bill would address a significant problem with our motor vehicle laws, and we urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on it.

Brian Ditzler  
Transportation Committee Chair  
Brian.Ditzler@MDSierra.org

Josh Tulkin  
Chapter Director  
Josh.Tulkin@MDSierra.org

Founded in 1892, the Sierra Club is America’s oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. The Maryland Chapter has over 75,000 members and supporters, and the Sierra Club nationwide has over 800,000 members and nearly four million supporters.