



**Olivia Bartlett, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team**

**Committee:** Environment and Transportation

**Testimony on:** HB0656 – Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2022

**Position:** Favorable

**Hearing Date:** February 15, 2022

**Bill Contact:** Delegate Lorig Charkoudian

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with more than 3000 members in all districts in Montgomery County as well as in several nearby jurisdictions. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep its members healthy and safe in a clean environment and which promote equity across all our diverse communities. DTMG strongly supports HB0656 because it will improve safety for pedestrians and bikers and prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries.

Roadway fatalities are 100% preventable. No one should lose their life from choosing to walk or bike on Maryland's roadways. However, the number of traffic-related pedestrian deaths in Maryland is growing every year. Although there were fewer cars on the road in 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions, pedestrian and cyclist deaths continued to climb. Last year alone, 130 Marylanders lost their lives while attempting to cross our streets and there were an additional 3,022 pedestrian-involved crashes which caused injury or property damage.

Improving the safety of our streets is also important for addressing climate change. Encouraging greater use of alternative modes of transportation, such as walking and biking, rather than cars requires our streets to be safer for pedestrians and bikers.

HB0656 aims to reduce the number of serious injuries caused by bike- and pedestrian-involved crashes, make progress towards Maryland's goal of zero vehicle-related deaths by 2030, and promote alternative modes of transportation, primarily biking and walking.

To achieve this goal, HB0565 requires the State Highway Administration (SHA) to conduct an analysis of corridors and intersections with high rates of pedestrian and bike injury and publish the results by July 2023. The analysis will focus on engineering improvements, the budget and timeline for making the improvements, and context-driven design elements and FHA-proven safety measures to improve pedestrian and biker safety. SHA will also increase annual spending levels in budget areas involving pedestrian and bicycle safety and review outstanding and upcoming preservation and maintenance projects for opportunities to implement.

Too often, SHA studies result in good plans for improving safety, but the plans can't be implemented for an extended period of time. Importantly, HB0656 will therefore require the SHA to implement near-term

incremental improvements which enhance safety in the interim when new safe infrastructure and engineering improvements will take more than 12 months to complete,

DTMG strongly supports these common-sense measures to improve safety for residents across Maryland and urges a **FAVORABLE** report on HB0656.

Respectfully submitted,

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