



**AAA Mid-Atlantic's Testimony In Support Of SB 176
Vehicle Laws - Rear-Facing Child Safety Seats - Requirement**

**Sponsor: Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee
(By Request - Departmental - Transportation)**

- AAA Mid-Atlantic **supports** SB 176, which requires a person transporting a child under a certain age in a motor vehicle to secure the child in a rear-facing child safety seat that complies with certain regulations until the child reaches the weight or height limit specified by the manufacturer of the child safety seat.
- MD's current law requires a child to ride in a federally approved child safety seat until the age of eight unless taller than 4'9".
- SB 176 will strengthen the law and help guide parents on better practices of keeping a child rear-facing, which the current law does not address. It is based on guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics' (AAP) current child seat recommendations and mirrors national best practices.
- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and AAP recommend keeping a child in rear-facing child safety seat for as long as possible, and AAA Mid-Atlantic supports that position, as well.
- Per the 2011 AAP policy statement: young children's bones, ligaments and joints are still developing which place them at an increased risk of head and spinal cord injury. Rear-facing seats can reduce this risk by supporting the head and preventing the relatively large head from moving independently from the proportionately smaller neck.
- Research has shown that children approaching the weight and height limitations of rear-facing seats do not experience any real discomfort remaining rear-facing, despite parents' perceived discomfort of their children.
- Virginia, Pennsylvania and thirteen other states require children ride rear-facing until at least age two.
- AAA supports efforts to protect our children on our roadways. Therefore, we request a favorable report for **SB 176**.

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