

HB 222/SB 416: Vehicle Laws - *Driving in Right-Hand Lanes- Interstate Highways in Rural Areas*

Environment and Transportation Committee

February 3, 2022

Delegate Neil Parrott/ Senator George Edwards

What is HB 222/SB 416?

- ▶ **On Interstate Highways in Rural areas, this bill encourages drivers who are traveling slower than the general speed of traffic to drive in the right-hand lane(s) if practicable**

Why Pass HB 222/SB 416?

- ▶ Driver Safety!
- ▶ Less Fatalities
- ▶ Safer Highways
- ▶ Keep slow drivers out of the fast lane

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration
Maryland Highway Safety Office

January 22, 2021

Statewide Crash Summary

| | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 5 Year AVG. | % |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------------|-------|
| Fatal Crashes | 480 | 483 | 518 | 485 | 496 | 492 | 0.4 |
| Injury Crashes | 30,721 | 34,720 | 34,664 | 33,930 | 32,919 | 33391 | 28.9 |
| Property Damage Crashes | 76,917 | 85,075 | 80,247 | 83,611 | 82,511 | 81672 | 70.7 |
| Total Crashes | 108,118 | 120,278 | 115,429 | 118,026 | 115,926 | 115555 | 100.0 |
| Total of All Fatalities | 521 | 522 | 558 | 512 | 535 | 530 | |
| Total Number Injured | 44,929 | 50,921 | 51,391 | 50,003 | 48,658 | 49,180 | |

As of January 22, 2021¹

Downfalls of Slow Drivers in the Left Lane

- ▶ Research shows that two cars riding side-by-side going the same speed can result in major traffic buildups¹
- ▶ You might remember from years ago the moving road block on I-95, creating congestion



¹<https://yellowhammernews.com/move-alabama-reasons-stay-left-lane/>

- ▶ The more congestion, the higher risk of accidents
- ▶ Slow drivers in the left lane force motorists who want to pass, to pass on the right and to dart around traffic to move forward



How Does Advising the Left Lane for Passing help?

Advising the left lane for passing educates Maryland drivers of safe driving habits



Road Rage Is An Issue

- ▶ “Those who stake out permanent positions in the left lane tend to provoke other cars to drive faster, often giving them no other choice but the dangerous strategy of passing on the right.”

- Lauren Fix, Forbes Magazine



Aggressive Driving Behaviors make up the Majority of Fatal Crashes in the U.S

Driving Behaviors Reported For Drivers And Motorcycle Operators Involved In Fatal Crashes, 2018

| Behavior | Number | Percent |
|--|---------------|---------------|
| Driving too fast for conditions or in excess of posted limit or racing | 8,596 | 16.7% |
| Under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or medication | 5,175 | 10.1 |
| Failure to keep in proper lane | 3,706 | 7.2 |
| Failure to yield right of way | 3,579 | 7.0 |
| Distracted (phone, talking, eating, object, etc.) | 2,688 | 5.2 |
| Operating vehicle in a careless manner | 2,797 | 5.4 |
| Failure to obey traffic signs, signals, or officer | 1,990 | 3.9 |
| Operating vehicle in erratic, reckless or negligent manner | 1,955 | 3.8 |
| Overcorrecting/oversteering | 1,617 | 3.1 |
| Vision obscured (rain, snow, glare, lights, building, trees, etc.) | 1,540 | 3.0 |
| Driving wrong way on one-way trafficway or wrong side of road | 1,243 | 2.4 |
| Drowsy, asleep, fatigued, ill, or blacked out | 1,221 | 2.4 |
| Swerving or avoiding due to wind, slippery surface, etc. | 1,176 | 2.3 |
| Making improper turn | 635 | 1.2 |
| Other factors | 5,203 | 10.1 |
| None reported | 9,167 | 17.8 |
| Unknown | 16,012 | 31.1 |
| Total drivers (1) | 51,490 | 100.0% |

(1) The sum of the numbers and percentages is greater than total drivers as more than one factor may be present for the same driver.

Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

How Would It Be Enforced?

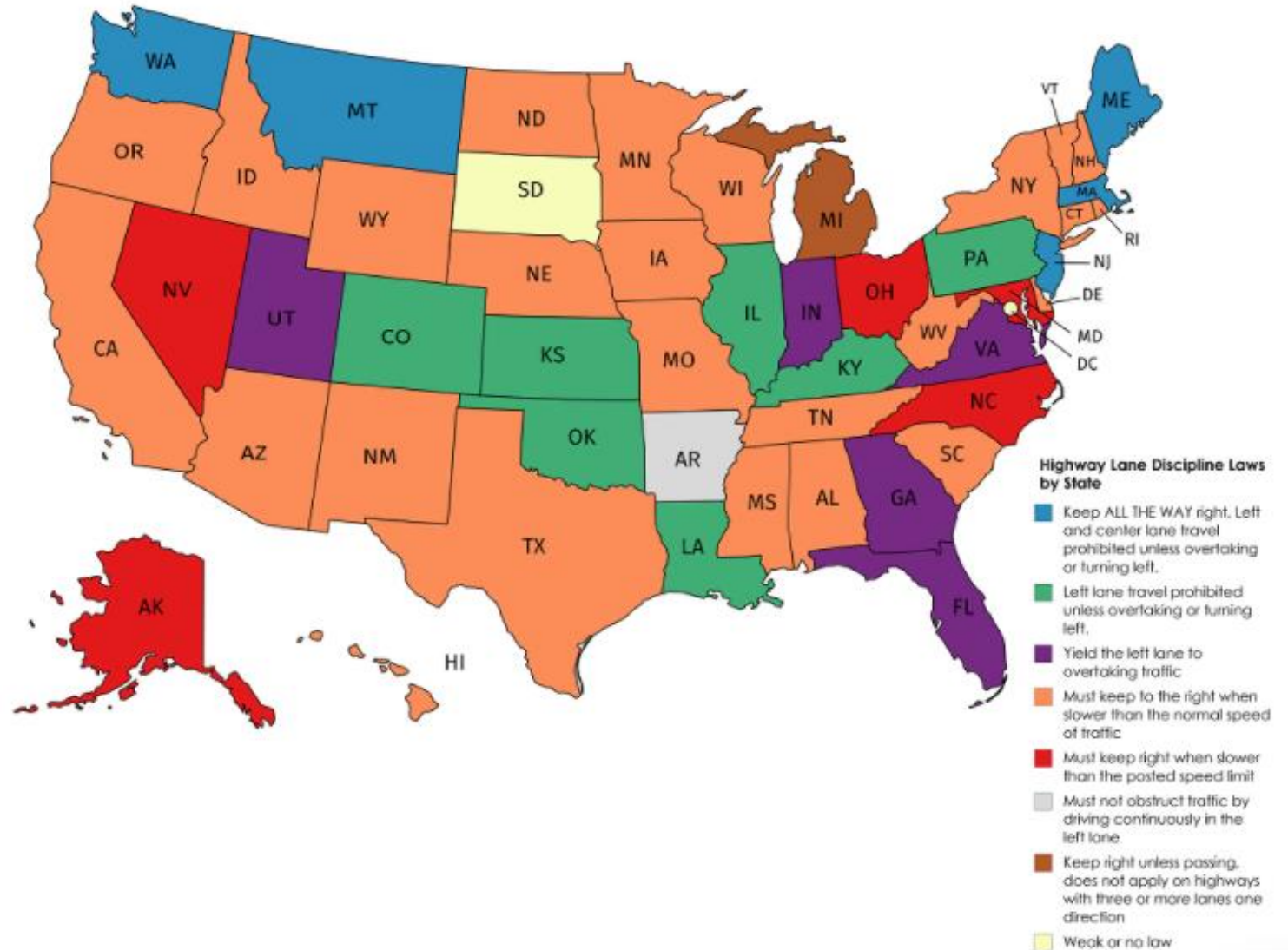
- ▶ It would not be enforced
- ▶ The law simply places signs along rural interstates advising motorists of safe driving habits

Educating Drivers

- ▶ This bill focuses heavily on educating drivers
- ▶ The State Highway Administration would be required to educate drivers about the new policy by:
 - ▶ Placing and maintaining signs at regular intervals on appropriate highways
 - ▶ Using the Dynamic Message Sign System located throughout the state

Other States

- ▶ Maryland is one of only a few states that allows drivers to use the left lane other than for passing
- ▶ By placing signs along Maryland rural highway, we are educating drivers which will help them to avoid getting stopped in other states that do enforce this a law



Be Courteous

- ▶ It is courteous to move over into the right lanes when you do not have an immediate reason to be in the left lane
- ▶ By allowing others to pass, and helping relieve congestion, drivers will experience a more pleasant and more efficient drive

By passing HB 222/SB 416,
we will be voting to create
safer interstates, reduce
congestion, and encourage
more courteous driving

Please Vote Favorably
For HB 222/SB 416

Questions?