

HB137of2022_Carr_Fav.pdf

Uploaded by: Al Carr

Position: FAV

Sponsor Testimony For House Bill 137
Vehicle Laws - Intersections - Prohibited Acts
aka DON'T BLOCK THE BOX!

Before the Environment & Transportation Committee

January 13, 2022

House Bill 137 would allow local police departments to enforce a “Don’t Block the Box” rule at signed intersections.

Thanks to the work of this committee, identical or similar bills passed the House four times in previous sessions. House Bill 137 is identical to HB311 of 2021, HB70 of 2020 and HB108 of 2019. It is also similar to HB672 of 2018.

Allowing this type of enforcement is a common sense measure that is in place in many other states and cities. It will improve safety for people on foot as well as in vehicles. It will also help traffic move smoothly so that everyone arrives at their destination sooner.

One amendment the committee may want to consider is on page 4, line 4 to clarify that a driver turning left must yield to bicyclists as well as pedestrians.

I ask for your favorable report.

HB 137- PGCEX - FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Angela Alsobrooks

Position: FAV



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILL: House Bill 137 – Vehicle Laws – Intersections – Prohibited Acts

SPONSOR: Delegate Carr

HEARING DATE: January 13, 2022

COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation

CONTACT: Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 137 – Vehicle Laws – Intersections – Prohibited Acts**, which prohibits a vehicle facing a circular green signal, a green arrow signal, or a steady yellow signal from entering an intersection if the vehicle is unable to safely and completely proceed through the intersection. The bill allows a vehicle making a left turn at a circular green signal to enter an intersection while yielding the right-of-way to a pedestrian or to a vehicle approaching from the opposite direction. The bill also allows a vehicle making a right turn to enter an intersection while yielding the right-of-way to a pedestrian or bicyclist. A police officer may not issue a citation for a violation unless the approach to the intersection has appropriate signage installed in accordance with the Maryland Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices notifying the public that a vehicle may not make a movement at the intersection that violates the bill's provisions.

The Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation has recommended support of HB 137 as it will potentially reduce the number of crashes in intersections within the County and State. HB 137 also is in line with the County's Vision Zero initiative, which has a goal of achieving zero fatalities on the County's roadways by 2040 by utilizing the 6Es: Education, Emergency Response, Engineering, Enforcement, Evaluation, and Equity to spur effective change.

For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive strongly **SUPPORTS House Bill 137** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.

HB0137 Favorable.pdf

Uploaded by: Daniel Marcin

Position: FAV

HB0137: Support

Thank you to Delegate Carr for this bill. I am honestly surprised that Maryland does not have a “don’t block the box” law.

Blocking the box creates unnecessarily dangerous conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as motorists. Gridlock frustrates drivers, who feel angry that their passage is blocked, and will look for ways to get around the traffic in the box that is blocking them. In doing so, they can be aggressive and not be on the lookout for more vulnerable road users who are using crosswalks or bike lanes. For those inside a car, there can be property damage, but for those without a protective steel coating, the consequences can be deadly.

I ask the committee to issue a favorable report on this bill, so that we can revisit this in future years to make this stronger; for instance, we should allow automated enforcement of these infractions at all intersections, not just those with signs.

Thank you, and again, I look forward to a favorable report.

Daniel Marcin
Economist
1910 Westchester Drive
Wheaton, MD 20902
District 18

HB137_FAV_Transit_Caucus

Uploaded by: Lorig Charkoudian

Position: FAV



MARYLAND TRANSIT CAUCUS

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Co-Chair: Delegate Lorig Charkoudian
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At-Large Member: Delegate Marc Korman

Dear Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

The more than 80 members of the Transit Caucus have voted to endorse HB0137, Vehicle Laws – Intersections – Prohibited Acts.

The Transit Caucus is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that supports a robust, equitable, modern, and effective transit network that serves all Marylanders. To that end, the Caucus is dedicated to advancing reliable and sustainable transportation options for Marylanders, including but not limited to interconnected public transit, a transition to clean vehicles, and to non-car mobility options and infrastructure to support these options as safe modes of transit. We believe ensuring that every Marylander has access to a variety of safe and reliable mobility options is a critical element of achieving an equitable, prosperous, and healthy state.

The Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report for this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Senator Malcolm Augustine
Co-Chair

Delegate Lorig Charkoudian
Co-Chair

Members

- Delegate Gabriel Acevero
- Delegate Carl Anderton
- Delegate Heather Bagnall
- Delegate Sandy Bartlett
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- Senator Ronald Young
- Delegate Pat Young
- Senator Craig Zucker

HB137_FAV_Wojahn

Uploaded by: Patrick Wojahn

Position: FAV



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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL

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January 11, 2022

Delegate Kumar Barve, Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: HB 0137/SB0087 Vehicle Laws – Intersections – Prohibited Acts

Dear Chair Barve and Committee Members:

The College Park City Council voted on January 11, 2022 to support HB 0137. This “Don’t Block the Box” legislation supports safe driving habits and practices that reduce congestion at signalized intersections. College Park is challenged with two such problematic intersections on US 1 at 495 and US 1 at Cherry Hill/Edgewood Road. We believe this legislation will help strengthen enforcement that will keep intersections clear and increase safety on our major roads.

We appreciate the work your committee has done on this bill and other transportation bills to increase safety.

On behalf of the City Council and our residents, I respectfully request your continued support for this legislation.

Sincerely,

Patrick L. Wojahn
Mayor

cc: Judicial Proceedings Committee, Honorable Smith, Chair
21st District Delegation

HB0137 - SHA - Intersection Prohibited Acts_LOI_FI

Uploaded by: Molly O'Hara

Position: INFO



Larry Hogan
Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford
Lt. Governor
James F. Ports, Jr.
Secretary

January 13, 2022

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chairman, House Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 137 – Vehicle Laws – Intersections – Prohibited Acts

Dear Chairman Barve and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on House Bill 137 but offers the following information for the Committee's consideration.

House Bill 137 prohibits drivers from entering the intersection of a green or yellow signal if the vehicle cannot completely clear the intersection. Enforcement of the Bill's provisions are contingent on signs being installed at an intersection, in accordance with standards specified in the Maryland Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

When a driver decides to enter an intersection without the ability to fully clear the intersection, it impedes the movements of other road users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and other motor vehicles. These unexpected conditions – blocked crosswalks and bike lanes – force pedestrians and bicyclists to make unpredictable movements to navigate the intersection, resulting in unsafe conditions and potential crashes.

House Bill 137 aims to improve pedestrian safety by reducing the likelihood of pedestrian crashes. Additionally, clarifying language enables law enforcement officials to enforce existing traffic laws concerning intersection movements.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating House Bill 137.

Sincerely,

Mitch Baldwin
Chief, Legislative Services Division
Maryland State Highway Administration
410-310-1056

Pilar Helm
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-841-1090