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B-360

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House Environment and Transportation Committee

House Office Building

6 Bladen Street, Room 251

Annapolis, MD 21401

**Testimony on HB0077
Motor Vehicles - Operation of Dirt Bikes - Prohibited Acts
Criminalizing Riding Dirt Bikes**

Position: Oppose

January 19, 2022

Dear **Chairman Barve and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:**

B-360 respectfully requests that the Committee issue an unfavorable report on HB0077. My name is Brittany Young and I am the founder and CEO of B-360 which exists at the unlikely intersection of three lanes; unrecognized potential, dirt bike culture, and STEM education. B-360's mission is to utilize dirt bike culture to end the cycle of poverty, disrupt the prison pipeline, and build bridges in communities. The organization works to shift street riders out of traffic into programming, safe spaces, and opportunities around their love of dirt bikes and skills. Leaders work with all stakeholders, including students, riders, communities, policymakers and elected officials, and law enforcement to create equitable solutions that work for all.

I oppose this bill because it will lead to the unjust incarceration of more Black lives and is not a solution oriented approach when comforting non violent issues. Dirt bike riders across the state who ride on asphalt, are left without a space to harness their talent. As a majority of dirt



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bike riders in urban settings are Black, this criminalizes a cultural staple in the Black community and unjustly blankets a criminal narrative for an entire group.

Since 2017, B-360 has been on a mission to transform the energy displayed in street riding into careers, education, and opportunities to ride safely out of traffic. July 2021 we hosted dirt bike riders at the B&O Railroad Museum in a 3 acre lot to allow them to ride safely and repair dirt bikes. This program was widely successful because of the partnership displayed by the local community, by dirt bike riders, supporters, the business community and so many more. In 2021 we launched in partnership with The Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office a Diversion Program that allows people with non violent crime, to volunteer and train with B-360 then gain career opportunities. We have seen a 100% success rate with this program and 100% retention rate as none of the dirt bike riders return back to riding on the streets. As of December 2021, B-360 has redirected 47 adults from incarceration into programming, safe spaces and workforce; through our programming we have saved the city of Baltimore upwards of \$1.7M and on track to save Baltimore \$233M in the next 5 years by continuing to serve over 8000 youth. We have a proven track record of success, harnessed in building community and equitable pipelines that serve all. Whether that pipeline be toward the booming STEM careers that produce upward mobility and economic stability for families, toward the \$32B motorsports industry that currently has only ONE Black professional dirt bike rider or toward a pipeline of economic justice that finally liberates those in a broken system to have freedom, the possibilities and opportunities are limitless.



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We have all heard the 96 decibel quiet roar of a dirt bike but I ask the committee, have you heard from the riders themselves? Have you heard from the 4 year old little girls in West Baltimore that has been riding a dirt bike since she was 2 and dreams of a space where she can freely ride? Have you heard from the 22 year old man who claims dirt bikes saved his life when he was stressed in his own city, who has saved up to buy dirt bike parts in hopes of creating and designing his own dirt bikes? Have you heard them describe dirt bike riding as a way to vent their stress within a system that disproportionately incarcerates them? Have you heard them fantasize of a safe space to ride away from streets that seem to hate them but remain their only path? Have you heard these riders describe their culture as a way of life in opposition to holding a gun? Have you heard their mantra? Have you heard them shout it loud and proud as they kickstart a ride? I have heard them and I have heard their mantra. I have heard them shout in the air a promise to themselves and the world: **“bikes up, guns down.”** We have and by listening we know there is limitless opportunity to solve the issue of people riding in the street by investing in programming and safe spaces, NOT policy that labels everyone a criminal.

Street riders are natural mechanics who fix and repair their bikes, and they utilize riding as a way to relieve stress. We must shift the focus from criminalizing dirt bike riding and towards providing dirt bike riders a safe place to ride as well as use this example as a lesson forward to reimagine public safety. I would like to propose to the committee a brief thought experiment.



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Particularly the music lovers amongst you. Imagine a world in which concert venues did not exist, however our love for music and access to modern era sound equipment remained. And remember, concert venues, safe places to play music for the masses do not exist in this world and yet your love for music remains. What would you do? Would you not invite friends and family to gather and play music wherever you could? Thankfully we do not live in such a world. Thankfully we have The Lyric, The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Rams Head Live! and Merriweather Post Pavilion (the Foo Fighters are scheduled for May and I am excited). But for dirt bike riders, they do not have a safe space to ride with friends and family where they can listen to the safe medley of their motors' quiet roar. They have the streets that do not want them, people that actively seek to hurt them when they ride, and now they have HB0077 a bill that seeks to imprison and fine them and is blind to their humanity, benevolence and proven potential for building community, to be leaders in STEM workforce development and mentorship.

For these reasons, I, Brittany Young urge an unfavorable report on **HB0077**

Sincerely,

-Brittany Young

Brittany Young