

Testimony for SB670

Good afternoon. My name is Julie Drizin. I've been a resident of Maryland for 27 years. I urge you to pass SB670 and here is why:

On a beautiful Sunday morning in August 2019, my sister and I went for a long, lovely bike ride. Heading home, we peddled uphill on an empty sidewalk of Wayne Avenue when a two-ton Chevy Tahoe slammed into me. I never saw it coming. My sister said she saw an SUV driving erratically, then she heard a loud sound, turned around and didn't see me. She spotted my helmet in a patch of tall grass, dropped her bike and ran over to find me lying unconscious on the ground. She thought I was dead.

My sister recalls that Nichole Foster, the driver of the 20-year-old SUV, ran over and said, "Oh, my god, I'm so sorry, I've been meaning to get my brakes checked." That said it all. She knowingly, dangerously drove a vehicle in disrepair.

Nichole Foster's negligence left me with a fractured pelvis, a broken hip and in excruciating pain. I needed emergency surgery for an internal bleed. I spent 10 days in intensive care at the Shock and Trauma Center at UMD Medical Center in Baltimore, then a month in rehab at Manor Care in Chevy Chase. When I was discharged, I still could not go home; I had to rent an Airbnb that had no stairs, where I lived alone for six weeks until I was allowed to put weight on my right leg again. For two and a half months, I was away from my family, unable to work, and in a lot of pain.

Nichole Foster is to blame for what happened to me, but so is the State of Maryland, for allowing her and other residents to drive vehicles with failing brakes, broken seat belts, missing rear view mirrors, balding tires and lights or horns that don't work.

SB 670 is my hope that *something* good can come of my tragedy. This is your chance to right a wrong. You have the power to prevent a car in crappy condition from mowing down a dad walking his son to school, plowing into a group of kids crossing a street, or crashing into a 55-year-old mother on a Sunday morning bike ride. Mandatory safety inspections could prevent a driver or a passenger or a pedestrian from being killed or becoming permanently disabled.

How is it possible that every state that touches Maryland – Pennsylvania, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Virginia and West Virginia – all require auto inspections, while the Free State does not? When I lived in Pennsylvania, everyone from age 16-99 had to get their cars inspected every two years and it was really not a big deal. It's time Maryland caught up with our wise neighbors who recognize that mandatory auto safety inspections save lives. Even Uber and Lyft require that their drivers' cars pass an annual safety inspection.

This accident disrupted my world. I'll never be the same. The day I was hit, I was in the best physical shape of my life. That health status was stolen from me in an instant. Now I walk with a limp and have chronic hip pain and PTSD. I am hypervigilant when driving or walking on sidewalks – fearful of cars around me, anxious when I see cyclists on the road.

I know it could have been so much worse. I am alive. I'm not paralyzed or addicted to opioids. I didn't lose my job. I have health insurance. Blue Cross paid out about \$70,000 for my medical care. And I could afford the \$12,000 in out-of-pocket costs.

Still, I am angry at the state of Maryland for not protecting me.

Driving is a privilege, not a right. We require people to pass a test to get a license to drive. We do this to make sure they know how to drive safely. But a person's driving skills don't matter if their vehicle is unsafe. The cost of a safety inspection pales in comparison to the cost of not getting a safety inspection.

I urge you to pass SB670 requiring drivers of older cars to have basic regular safety inspections, as our wise neighboring states already do.