



HB73 – Baltimore City – Complete Streets and Safe Routes to School Programs – Funding

Testimony before Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 29, 2022

Position: Favorable

Dear Judicial Proceedings Committee Members,

My name is Richard Deutschmann, and I represent the 750+ members of Indivisible Howard County. We are providing written testimony today to support HB73, to provide a steady source of funding for the Baltimore Complete Streets and Safe Routes to School programs. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are grateful for the leadership of Delegate Lewis for sponsoring this bill.

Many Baltimoreans need to walk or bike to get to jobs, stores, public transportation, school, places of worship, medical visits, and to see friends and family. In addition, many Baltimore students walk or ride their bike to schools. Walking and biking is a great option because it is beneficial for health and reduces reliance on fossil fuels. However, we need walking and biking to be safe. Sadly, pedestrian and bicyclist injuries and fatalities have risen in recent years. This bill invests in infrastructure to make Baltimore more pedestrian and bike friendly, and to provide a safer route for students to get to school.

As we work to build mitigation strategies for climate change, we need to change the ways that our city streets are laid out. Currently, many streets emphasize automobile traffic above all other forms of transportation. This needs to change, to make our cities more climate friendly, to increase non-polluting forms of transportation, to reduce harmful emissions and the associated health effects of air pollution, and most importantly to get our kids to and from school safely. The current Complete Streets and Safe Routes to School programs in Baltimore do just that, building infrastructure that emphasize these non-polluting forms of transportation, while creating pedestrian and bike routes for kids to safely get from home to school. However, a dedicated funding stream is needed for each of these programs. This legislation creates this dedicated source, which will fund these programs well into the future.

This legislation will save lives and promote health and the environment. Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable report on this bill.

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