



AAA Mid-Atlantic's Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 147 Motor Vehicles - Operation When Approaching Disabled Vehicles

Sponsor: Senator Jeff Waldstreicher

- AAA Mid-Atlantic supports **SB 147**, which requires drivers approaching a disabled vehicle displaying hazard warning lights, road flares or other caution signals from the rear to make a lane change into an available lane not immediately adjacent to the vehicle, or to slow to a reasonable and prudent speed that is safe.
- **SB 147** will expand the state's current move-over law, to cover **all** vehicles displaying hazard lights. Current law applies to emergency vehicles, tow trucks, and service vehicles.
- Adding disabled motorists to the law will provide motorists, as well as emergency personnel and/or emergency road crews, who may be aiding them with additional protection when they are on the side of the road.
- Sadly, there are numerous examples of disabled motorists being struck on the side of the road in Maryland. Kennedy Sookal, of Reisterstown, and Stuart Johnson, of Baltimore, were both killed in separate incidents in 2019, as they tried to change a tire on the side of the road.
- Being on the side of the road is dangerous for everyone and we have seen that even those who the law is already intended to protect are not exempt from the perils on the road.
- Just a few months ago, a member of our AAA family, contractor, Muhammad Shehzad, was killed on the side of the road in Howard County right after changing the tire of a AAA member.
- At AAA, we often hear from motorists that they are either unaware of state laws that require them to slow down and move over for emergency vehicles or that they are uncertain which groups or types of vehicles apply.
- A AAA Mid-Atlantic poll of Maryland drivers conducted last fall indicated a similar lack of understanding or awareness around the state's Move Over law, with 32% of Maryland drivers polled indicating they were 'unsure' or thought there was 'no' Move Over law in the state.
- In AAA Mid-Atlantic's recent poll, 84% of those surveyed indicated they would support move-over laws to cover disabled motorists in Maryland.

- Whether there is a police officer, fireman, tow truck driver or disabled motorist on the side of the road, AAA implores motorists to slow down and, if safe to do so, move away and change lanes to create safe space around the person on the side of the road.
- At increasing speeds on our highways, it may be difficult at times for motorists to distinguish between the nuances. SB 147 simplifies the law so that caution must be extended to anyone with flashing lights in a stationary vehicle on the roadside.
- Despite having the laws, unfortunately, we are still losing law enforcement officers, tow truck operators and others as they conduct business on the roadways.
- AAA supports laws to protect first responders, law enforcement officers and tow truck operators. We would also like to see those same protections applied to motorist with a disabled vehicle.
- Some states have extended Move Over protections to include motorist with a disabled vehicle at the roadside.
- Currently seven states include disabled motorists in their move over law. They include Arizona, Connecticut, Illinois, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee.
- AAA applauds Senator Waldstreicher for sponsoring this bill to clarify that no matter what type of vehicle may be flashing lights by the side of the road, or the color of those lights, all involved in roadside situations are at high risk.
- On behalf of AAA Mid-Atlantic's nearly one million Maryland members, we urge the Committee to give **SB 147** a favorable report.

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