

Gretchen Butts Helmet Bill Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Gretchen Butts

Position: FAV

Gretchen Butts, Maryland

- BS and MS in Nursing; MA in Business Management/Human Resources
- Primary Care Nurse Practitioner (BS and MS in Nursing) and spent 25 years practicing as an Adult/Internal Medicine Nurse Practitioner while gaining vast experience in the Olympic Equestrian sport of Eventing.
- Past and current committee work for the United States Eventing Association and United States Equestrian Federation, including work on the Safety, Licensed Officials and Competitions committees.
- Past member of the USEA Board of Governors and USEA Vice President of Education.
- Current Level 3 FEI International Eventing Technical Delegate and Eventing Judge, USEF Equestrian Eventing S Technical Delegate and Eventing Judge
- International Technical Official at the 2008 Olympic Games, Assistant Technical Delegate for the 2010 World Equestrian Games.
- Highest ranking Eventing Official in Maryland
- Experienced Eventing competitor for over 40 years through the highest level of International Eventing.

- Personal recreational pursuits include running, alpine hiking and many years sailing with husband Robert on the Chesapeake.
- Family: 2 adult daughters-- Steph, USEA ICP Level 2 instructor and graduate A Pony Clubber with experience thru International competition levels. She is part of the Waredaca staff, business team and co-owner of the Waredaca Brewing Company. Youngest daughter, Devon, is a licensed Doctor of Physical Therapy, currently practicing in Chicago.

I was invited to address everyone today as to the issue of minors wearing helmets. Quite honestly, I was **astonished** to find that this was not an active rule. To me, this is a 'no brainer' and an issue that needs immediate attention and change. Why....because..

Horseback riding is a very dangerous activity!!

Horseback riding carries greater risk for minors than motorcycle racing, cycling, football and skiing. The fact that helmet use substantially lessens the risk of life-threatening injuries and death is very well documented. Regretfully, equestrian helmet legislation often is the result of these tragic accidents where injuries could have been lessened and lives saved if only equestrian helmets were worn. Many states and all of the national and international equestrian organizations mandate helmet use at all times when minors are mounted on a horse.

You have the ability to effect this change in our state where the horse industry is HUGE. Horses are big business that not only provides a

significant economic stamp and includes world class equestrian competition. Horseback riding is a very popular recreational activity that many Marylanders young and old thrive on.

Think of the impact and outcome that one horrific accident of a child, followed by the personal details of that child and family adding to this tragedy of a child falling off a horse while not wearing a helmet to have everyone questioning why a helmet was not worn.

Summary points

- Helmets are underutilized in equestrian riding activities and while guidelines have been developed for competitive activities, change has been slow to reach all types of recreational equestrian activities
- Riding culture, peer pressure and social media often discourages minor riders to always wear a helmet when mounted
- This is problematic, knowing the incidence of concussion in equestrian injury is double that of many other high-impact sports in which minors participate.
- I URGE you, as lawmakers, to make a difference NOW, knowing with absolute certainty you will lessen risks and save lives in doing so!

testimony - helmet bill Gaertner.pages.pdf

Uploaded by: Jane Seigler

Position: FAV



Sports Medicine Institute

Ronald E. Delanois, M.D., F.A.A.O.S.
The Jerome P. Reichmister, M.D.,
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Erica Gaertner, M.D.
Sports Medicine Primary Care

Taylor Burch, P.A.-C.

January 25, 2023

To whom it may concern:

My name is Erica Gaertner and I am writing in support of the helmet bill for minors riding on public land. As a primary care sports medicine doctor who specializes in concussion, I have seen many head injuries. Helmets play a huge role in preventing head injuries to a degree, and if a head injury does occur while wearing a helmet, it is usually less severe because of the helmet. The consequences of head injuries can be permanent, debilitating and sometimes life threatening. We have a way to reduce some of this risk, and that is by wearing a helmet. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Erica Gaertner MD
Primary Care Sports Medicine
LifeBridge Health Sports Medicine Institute
Team Physician Loyola University Maryland
Medical Director National Steeplechase Association

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Uploaded by: Jane Seigler

Position: FAV



MARYLAND
HORSE
COUNCIL

P.O. Box 606 | Lisbon, Maryland 21797
www.mdhorsecouncil.org

One Common Bond: The Horse
One Common Voice: The Horse Council

In the House Environment & Transportation Committee, February 2, 2023

Testimony of the Maryland Horse Council on HB 20

Vehicle Laws – Horse Riding – Helmet Requirement for Minors - **FAVORABLE**

The Maryland Horse Council (MHC) is a membership-based trade association that represents the state-wide horse industry in Maryland. Our members include horse farms; horse related businesses; equestrian competitors; trainers; individual enthusiasts; equine-assisted therapy programs; and breed, interest, and discipline associations. We represent over 30,000 Marylanders who make their living with horses, or who just own and love them.

There are numerous reasons why this is a good bill:

- Seventy percent of all reported equestrian fall accidents resulted in a head injury, of which 91% were concussions.
- Head injuries account for 18 percent of emergency room injuries among equestrians.
- Medical Examiner reports show that 60% or more of horse-related deaths are caused by head injuries. Helmets can reduce this possibility by 70-80%.
- The American Medical Equestrian Association calculates that ASTM approved helmets have reduced all riding-related head injuries by 30% and severe head injuries by 50%.
- Head injuries are the most common reason for horse-related hospital admissions.
([https://sportsmedicine-open.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s40798-019-0193-0#:~:text=Injuries%20reported%20for%20undamaged%20helmets,diffuse%20axonal%20injury%20\(DAI\)](https://sportsmedicine-open.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s40798-019-0193-0#:~:text=Injuries%20reported%20for%20undamaged%20helmets,diffuse%20axonal%20injury%20(DAI);); https://vtx.vt.edu/videos/k/2021/10/1_dtsg3mj7.html; <https://equusmagazine.com/riding/riding-helmet-facts/>)
- Many horse organizations in Maryland, including Pony Clubs and horse show/competition associations and venues already support and promote helmet safety and require that minors and adults wear ASTM approved helmets at all times while mounted. Many lesson stables do, as well, frequently required by insurance carriers, though some report receiving “pushback” from students and even parents of students, when trying to enforce their rules. Passing a statewide law would provide legal reinforcement for the lesson stable owner’s or trainer’s own rules/requirements.

In addition, Dr. Erica Gaertner, a primary care sports medicine specialist at LifeBridge Health Sports Medicine Institute; Team Physician for Loyola University Maryland; and Medical Director of the National Steeplechase Association is out of the country but has submitted a letter in support of this bill, which is included in our written materials.

At least two other states, Florida and New York, already have helmet laws for minors in effect. Florida passed the law in 2009 and New York in 2013. In both states, the legislation was reportedly introduced in response to a horse-related head injury death of a minor. Let's not let this be the case in Maryland.

We urge the Committee to give HB 20 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

THE MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL
(844) MDHORSE (844-634-6773)
info@mdhorsecouncil.org

HB20 Equestrian Helmets WRITTEN TESTIMONY.pdf

Uploaded by: Mary Lehman

Position: FAV



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 0020 Vehicle Laws – Horse Riding – Helmet Requirement for Minors
SUPPORT

GOOD AFTERNOON CHAIR BARVE, VICE CHAIR STEIN AND ESTEEMED COLLEAGUES.
FOR THE RECORD, I'M DELEGATE MARY LEHMAN ASKING FOR YOUR FAVORABLE
REPORT FOR HB 0020, A BILL REQUIRING HELMETS FOR EQUESTRIANS UNDER AGE
18 WHO ARE RIDING ON PUBLIC TRAILS AND OTHER PUBLIC PROPERTY.

IF THIS BILL SOUNDS FAMILIAR TO SOME OF YOU, IT'S BECAUSE THE COMMITTEE
VOTED IT FAVORABLY LAST YEAR AND IT PASSED THE FULL HOUSE. THE SENATE
JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE NEVER MOVED IT. I AM PRESENTING THE BILL
AS IT PASSED OUT OF THIS COMMITTEE AND OF THE FULL HOUSE, WITH JUST ONE
CHANGE EXEMPTING AMISH AND MENONITE RIDERS.

THE BILL REQUIRES THAT ADULTS WHO ARE SUPERVISING MINORS ENSURE THAT
YOUTH RIDERS ARE WEARING A PROPERLY FITTED, SECURED HELMET THAT MEETS
NATIONAL HEADGEAR SAFETY STANDARDS.

EQUESTRIAN INJURIES ARE PRIMARILY THE RESULT OF A FALL; AND FALLING FROM
A HORSE IS NOT AN UNCOMMON OCCURRENCE. THE GOAL OF HB 0020 IS TO
PROTECT YOUNG EQUESTRIANS FROM CONCUSSIONS AND OTHER SERIOUS BRAIN



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

OR HEAD INJURIES BY REQUIRING THEM TO WEAR A HELMET WHEN RIDING ON PUBLIC LAND. YOU WILL HEAR FROM SOME YOUNG RIDERS AND OTHER EQUESTRIANS ABOUT INJURIES THEY OR OTHERS THEY KNOW HAVE SUSTAINED EVEN WHEN THEY WERE WEARING A HELMET AND HOW QUICKLY THOSE INCIDENTS OCCUR INVOLVING EVEN THE MOST SKILLED RIDERS.

CONCUSSION SAFETY AND PREVENTION HAS BECOME A BIG ISSUE IN SPORTS. THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION DEFINES A CONCUSSION AS A BRAIN INJURY CAUSED BY A BUMP OR BLOW TO THE HEAD THAT CAN CHANGE THE WAY THE BRAIN NORMALLY WORKS. EVEN WHAT SEEMS TO BE A MILD BUMP ON THE HEAD CAN BE SERIOUS.

WHILE THERE IS NO CONCUSSION-PROOF HELMET, AN EQUESTRIAN HELMET THAT MEETS OR EXCEEDS THE STANDARDS OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF TESTING AND MATERIALS FOR PROTECTIVE HEADGEAR USED IN EQUESTRIAN RIDING, WILL HELP PROTECT MINORS.

HB 0020 ONLY APPLIES TO MINORS RIDING HORSES ON HIGHWAYS, PUBLIC RIDING PATHS OR OTHER PUBLIC PROPERTY. IT ALSO APPLIES TO DONKEYS, MULES AND PONIES. IT DOES **NOT** APPLY TO: YOUTH PRACTICING FOR OR COMPETING IN



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ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

EVENTS WHERE HELMETS ARE NOT WORN; THOSE CROSSING A PUBLIC ROAD THAT SEPARATES PRIVATE LAND; AND THOSE ENGAGED IN AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES.

WHILE AN ADULT PRESENT AND DIRECTLY SUPERVISING A MINOR MAY RECEIVE A WRITTEN CITATION, IF THE ADULT IS SUPERVISING MULTIPLE YOUTH WHO ARE NOT WEARING HELMETS, HE OR SHE WOULD RECEIVE A SINGLE CITATION. THE GOAL IS TO PREVENT SUBSEQUENT VIOLATIONS.

THE USE OF AN APPROPRIATE EQUESTRIAN HELMET SHOULD BE AS COMMONPLACE AS SEAT-BELTS OR INFANT AND BOOSTER SEATS FOR CHILDREN RIDING IN CARS. MD REQUIRES KIDS TO WEAR BIKE HELMETS, WHICH IT SHOULD, BUT A FALL FROM A HORSE IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN A FALL FROM A BICYCLE. HB 0020 WILL HELP SAFEGUARD YOUNG EQUESTRIANS FROM SERIOUS HEAD TRAUMA AS A RESULT OF A FALL.

THANK YOU AND I URGE A FAVORABLE REPORT.

1b - HB 20 - E_T - MACHO - LOS.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Maryland State of

Position: FAV



2023 SESSION

BILL: HB 20 - Vehicle Laws – Horse Riding – Helmet Requirement for Minors

COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation Committee

POSITION: Letter of Support

BILL ANALYSIS: House Bill (HB) 20 prohibits an adult who is directly supervising a minor from allowing the minor to ride a horse unless the minor is wearing a properly secured helmet that meets certain standards. An individual who violates this bill will be subject to a maximum \$500 fine under the Maryland Vehicle Law.

POSITION RATIONALE: The Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO) supports HB 20. HB 20 ensures that minors are protected against life-altering brain damage or head injury by mandating minors to wear a secured helmet when horseback riding.¹ Equestrian sports are the most common cause of sports-related brain injury in the United States. Horseback riding carries a higher injury rate than both football and motorcycle racing. Maryland's universal helmet rule requires all motorcyclists and children riding bicycles to wear a helmet—the same standard for horseback riding would protect Maryland children and teens from serious brain or head injury. New York and Florida have decades-long statewide helmet statutes, and California and Washington have enacted helmet ordinances in specific municipalities.²

According to the Centers for Disease Control National Center for Injury Prevention, over 100,000 horse riding-related accidents occur each year in the United States. It is estimated that 50,000 emergency room visits annually are due to horseback riding injuries.³ The most common parts of the body injured during equestrian accidents are the head and neck.⁴ Riders aged 10 to 14 years old are the most likely to be involved in an accident and are at a higher risk for more severe brain injury.¹ A brain injury in childhood can lead to lifelong consequences for both the child and their family.

It has been demonstrated that riding helmets save lives and prevent serious brain injury. The New England Journal of Medicine reported that wearing a helmet reduces head and brain injuries by 85%.¹ Helmets are accessible, cost-effective, and scientifically shown to decrease head injury. This bill has the potential to reduce debilitating injuries and decrease Medicaid and Developmental Disabilities Administration costs. The lifetime cost of acute head injury can be up to \$3 million.⁵

For these reasons, the Maryland Association of County Health Officers submits this letter of support for HB 20. For more information, please contact Ruth Maiorana, MACHO Executive Director at rmaiora1@jhu.edu or 410-937-1433. *This communication reflects the position of MACHO.*

¹ Agarwal, Nitin, and Rut Thakkar Kho Than. "Sports-Related Head Injury." American Association of Neurological Surgeons.

² Jurga, Fran. "New York State's Equestrian Helmet Law Amended to Age 18." EQUUS (2017).

³ Meredith, Lauren, Robert Ekman, and Robert Thomson. "Horse-Related Incidents and Factors for Predicting Injuries to the Head." BMJ Open Sport & Exercise Medicine 4, no. 1 (2018): e000398.

⁴ Meredith, Lauren, Robert Ekman, and Robert Thomson. "Horse-Related Incidents and Factors for Predicting Injuries to the Head." BMJ Open Sport & Exercise Medicine 4, no. 1 (2018): e000398.

⁵ Edmonds, Chandi. "The Steep Cost of Brain Injury Recovery." Available from <https://news.northwestern.edu/stories/2015/12/opinion-next-avenue-brain-injury/>.

1a - HB 20 - ENT - MDH - LOS.docx (2).pdf

Uploaded by: State of Maryland (MD)

Position: FAV



Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Acting Secretary

February 2, 2023

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: HB 20 – Vehicle Laws – Horse Riding – Helmet Requirement for Minors – Letter of Support

Dear Chair Barve and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) is submitting this letter of support for House Bill (HB) 20 – Vehicle Laws – Horse Riding – Helmet Requirement for Minors. This bill will require minors to wear a helmet when riding horses, except in certain circumstances. Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is an injury to the brain, caused by a sudden or violent blow to the head or body. TBIs can be mild, moderate, or severe and can lead to death or permanent disability. Some individuals with TBIs may need additional medical care and support with daily living activities. TBIs can occur when a rider falls off a horse or is struck by the horse. Wearing a helmet can reduce the risk for head injury by 40-50% in equestrian sports.¹

According to data from the Maryland Health Services Cost Review Commission, from 2016-2020, there were 456 horse-related injuries with a TBI diagnosis seen in emergency departments in Maryland hospitals. Of these, 179 (39%) occurred to individuals aged 19 and younger.

MDH operates the Youth Camp Program, which licenses and inspects youth camps across the state. Youth camps are regulated under COMAR 10.16.06, which already requires participants to wear an American Society of Testing and Materials rated helmet for equestrian events.

I hope this information is useful. If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Megan Peters, Acting Director of Governmental Affairs at megan.peters@maryland.gov or (410) 260-3190.

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Acting Secretary

¹ Zuckerman, S. L., Morgan, C. D., Burks, S., Forbes, J. A., Chambless, L. B., Solomon, G. S., & Sills, A. K. (2015). Functional and structural traumatic brain injury in equestrian sports: a review of the literature. World neurosurgery, 83(6), 1098-1113.

HB0020 Bill Written Testimony - Google Docs.pdf

Uploaded by: Victoria Picha

Position: FWA

Regarding The Maryland Horse Council

2/2/23

My name is Victoria Picha and I am an active youth participant in Maryland's horse community. I am testifying in favor of HB 20 because I find it irresponsible and dangerous that there is no more strict enforcement of the use of helmets for youth equestrians in Maryland. I have grown up around horses my whole life, even owning my own at six years old. I have extensive knowledge of horses but even with my more than a decade of experience, horses are still unpredictable and can be dangerous in any situation. I have watched adults and children around me get injured in all sorts of situations, most of them leaving us in shock. My argument is if all bicyclists under the age of 16 are required to wear a helmet on public property, why don't the same rules or more apply to youth when riding a horse? A horse has its own thoughts and actions, it is much more dangerous and harder to control than a bike. Over the summer my riding coach got into an accident while riding one of her horses. The horse suffered an aneurysm and fell on top of her while riding in a competition. Sadly the horse, Tora, did not survive but my coach walked away with no serious injuries. If my coach was not wearing the appropriate helmet the effect this accident could have had on her could have been much worse. I have many friends that are youth participants in Maryland's horse community. It is normalized and supported that we wear correctly fitted and in-regulation helmets to prevent common head injuries. I felt the need to share my story because passing this bill would prevent many brain injuries and keep youth members of our community safe. Your consideration of these matters and the importance of safety for our youth is very much appreciated.