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WASHINGTON REGIONAL ALCOHOL PROGRAM

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February 8, 2023

Members of the Judiciary Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
Annapolis, Maryland

Re.: Support for "Grossly Negligent or Drunk or Drugged Operation of Vehicle or Vessel - Prior Convictions," HB 483, Simmons, D-Anne Arundel County

"Alcohol use is the leading known contributing factor in fatal boating" incidents.

- U.S. Coast Guard ("2021 Recreational Boating Statistics")

Dear Delegates:

On behalf of the Maryland nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program's (WRAP) Board of Directors, staff, volunteers and the more than six-million Maryland residents we serve in the fight against drunk driving and underage drinking (including having served as project director of both Maryland's Checkpoint Strikeforce campaign and "Maryland Remembers" ceremony), I wanted to formally communicate to you WRAP's unequivocal support for **House Bill 483, "Grossly Negligent or Drunk or Drugged Operation of Vehicle or Vessel - Prior Convictions" (Simmons, D-Anne Arundel County).**

Succinctly, HB 483 proposes to count previous boating under the influence convictions (BUI, Maryland Natural Resources Article 8-738) as prior convictions relative to Maryland's impaired driving statutes (21-902) when it comes to enhanced penalties for second or subsequent violations of Maryland's impaired driving laws.

(continued)



A coalition of diverse interests using effective education, innovative programs and targeted advocacy to end alcohol-impaired driving and underage drinking in the Washington, DC metro area.

A copy of WRAP's 1029th financial statement is available by visiting WRAP, 7900 Westpark Drive, Suite A550, Tysons, VA 22102 or by calling 703/893-0461. Documents and information submitted under the MD Sunshine Act are also available for the cost of postage and copies from the MD Secy. of State, State House, Annapolis, MD 21401, 410-977-1554.

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While I look forward to better equating the two crimes when it comes to the uniform imposition of sanctions for either at today's Judiciary Committee hearing on such, quite simply, impaired driving is impaired driving whether it be on land or water. Indeed, impaired driving on land or water is a distinction without a difference as both are criminal behaviors which far too often have deadly consequences.

□□□□□

In a state where nearly a third (30.7% in 2021, Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration's Highway Safety Office) of traffic fatalities still involve drunk drivers – and where 2021 bore witness to Maryland posting increases in the number of drunk driving crashes (up 4.9%) and number of persons injured in said crashes (up 3.9%) (MDOT) -- the Maryland nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program supports House Bill 483 as a means of equitably applying the state's DUI and BUI laws.

In as much, we thank you, in advance, for your consideration of favorably reporting this potentially lifesaving legislation. I may be directly reached with any questions at either 703-893-0461 or at kurt@wrap.org.

Cordially,



Kurt Gregory Erickson
President