

**HB102 - Motorcycles – Passenger Restrictions**  
**Delegate April Miller**  
**Testimony for Bill Hearing on 2/1/24 @ 1:00 p.m.**

Good afternoon Chair Korman, Vice-Chair Boyce and my esteemed colleagues on the Environment and Transportation Committee. I am Delegate April Miller, and I am here today to request your favorable opinion of House Bill 102. This bill has been cross-filed in the Senate by Senator Carter (SB730).

Many of you may look at me and think- she doesn't look like a motorcycle maven, why is she bringing this bill forward? And you are correct, I'm not, but what I am is a Mom. So, when I was presented with a struggle that one of our Frederick County moms was going through- I had to act. Some of you may understand how difficult co-parenting after divorce can be- one afternoon this mom received a phone call that her ex-husband had taken off on his motorcycle down the highway with their 4-year-old on the back. She panics- and her family reaches out to law enforcement for help- and they are told there is nothing they can do. It is perfectly legal in the State of Maryland for a young child to be driven on the back of his bike at let's just say 70mph.

When I heard about this- I thought of all that I had to do when my own three babies were growing up in Maryland- to legally and safely secure them in their car seats. We went through 3 or 4 different car seats as they grew- we had rear facing until 20 pounds and 1 year of age, then 8- and 80-pound restrictions, 5-point harnesses and car anchors, and even some of these are now outdated, replaced with stronger laws. So, that 4-year-old is carefully taken out of the secure car seat by his mom and then when she hands him over to his Dad, he can just pop him on the rear seat of his bike, put a helmet on him, and drive down the same MD roads the mom just drove. This does not seem right - so I starting researching what other states do.

I considered age restrictions, however, as my motorcycle friends pointed out, this may not have the intended effect, as we know children grow at different rates, and it was suggested that it was more important from a safety standpoint, that they be able to reach the rear foot pegs. Motorcycles lack the stability of a car or truck, and they don't have the same protection There are currently only a few states with an age restriction, but more are along the line of this bill, including CA.

Here are some MD fast facts:

Motorcycle riders 21-49 are over-represented in crashes and 9 out of 10 involve male riders and three-quarters of the passengers involved are female. While fatality numbers have decreased, the number of crashes is high. In an accident, a small child could suffer catastrophic injuries including traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries as well as severe organ damage.

Our motorcycle laws are not protecting our youngest children, all while MD car seat laws are being constantly updated as new safety and information, as well as car seat technology, improves.

I grew up in Md, and hated wearing my seatbelt, but there were reasons they were put in the cars.

In Rockville, in the 1950's, my grandparents were driving with their infant son being held on my grandmother's lap in the front seat, as that was what was done then. Tragically, they were involved in a crash and my baby Uncle was thrown to the floor. He did not survive, and my family was devastated.

This would not have -legally- happened in Rockville today. Because the motor vehicle and car seat laws evolved to protect children. The laws need to evolve in motorcycle safety as well before another family has to live with the soul crushing loss of a child.

Please help protect Maryland children with your support and a favorable report on House Bill 102.