

ACT Testimony_HB0337_Sarah Debbink Langenkamp Memo

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Position: FAV



Montgomery County's Advocates for Better Transportation

P.O. Box 7074, Silver Spring MD 20907 • admin@actfortransit.org

February 13, 2024

SUPPORT for the Sarah Debbink Langenkamp Memorial Act

HB 337 and SB 126

We are writing to request your support for the Sarah Debbink Langenkamp Memorial Act (HB 337 and SB 0315). As ACT members and residents of Montgomery County, we are deeply concerned about both the disregard for road safety that led to Sarah Langenkamp's death in 2022, and the subsequent failure of the justice system to deliver a penalty proportionate to the harm inflicted on Ms. Langenkamp and her family. If Maryland is to achieve its stated goal of zero road deaths by 2030, there is an urgent need for stricter road safety laws to prevent the sort of reckless driving that led to Ms. Langenkamp's death.

According to the 2050 Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan, published last month, almost three quarters (74%) of Maryland residents surveyed feel unsafe cycling on roads due to concerns about traffic. Unfortunately, these fears are well-founded: approximately 650 people are injured and 10 killed on Maryland's roads every year in crashes involving bicycles. These crashes are disproportionately likely to cause serious injury to the cyclist: of all crashes involving a bicycle between 2018 and 2022, more than 85% resulted in an injury—more than three times the rate of injury crashes occurring statewide.

Sarah Langenkamp's death was not an isolated incident, and until more comprehensive action is taken to address the dangers faced by cyclists on Maryland's roads, we can expect this tragic pattern to continue. While the proposed legislation is a small step, it is necessary to ensure that those who fail to obey the rules of the road are held accountable for the consequences of their actions. We strongly urge you to vote yes on the Sarah Debbink Langenkamp Memorial Act (HB 337 and SB 0315).

Sincerely,

Michael Walken¹ and Richard Hoyer
On Behalf of Action Committee for Transit

¹ I am a proud resident of Silver Spring, Maryland, having emigrated from the United Kingdom in 2018. While I was an avid cyclist before moving to the States—and despite being a car-free household—my wife and I currently do not cycle on Maryland's roads due to safety concerns. I became a member of the Action Committee for Transit in 2023 to support their advocacy for safer, more environmentally sustainable transportation options in Montgomery County.

HB0337 Langenkamp Testimony -- Sarah Langenkamp Me

Uploaded by: Daniel Langenkamp

Position: FAV

Testimony
By Daniel Langenkamp
On the Sarah Langenkamp Memorial Safety Act HB0337
Maryland House of Delegates Environment and Transportation Committee
Thursday, February 22, 2024

Good afternoon, Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Committee Members.

Eighteen months ago, my wife, Sarah Debbink Langenkamp, a U.S. diplomat and the mother of our two boys, was crushed when a driver for Beacon Building Supply swung his 50,000 pound truck into his parking lot without seeing Sarah, who was riding her bike in a clearly marked bike lane to his right. He struck her handlebars first, and when she fell, the wheels of his massive truck rolled over her, crushing her, and taking the life of this extraordinary mother, U.S. diplomat, and dear friend to many.

Sarah and I had just been evacuated for our safety from Ukraine, a war zone, *for our safety*, only to be killed on a street in Bethesda. We had just arrived back in the area weeks before.

You would think the crime of killing a person would engender a punishment worthy of magnitude of the act. After all, Maryland imposes far higher punishments for less serious crimes. The maximum penalty for [littering](#) can land you a fine of \$30,000 and five years in prison.

Yet when the driver who killed Sarah was sentenced in September, he was handed a sentence for a traffic violation that carried a fine of just \$2,000 and 150 hours of community service -- the maximum punishment allowed by law for killing a vulnerable road user. His license was referred for a six-month suspension to the Maryland Department of Motor Vehicles. He will likely be driving again next month.

The judge in the case, expressing his own frustration, said the law simply did not give him the ability to impose a stiffer sentence because the crime of killing with a vehicle was considered a traffic violation. I'm sorry, he said. The law did not give him the ability to do anything more.

In the wake of the sentencing, I have worked with Montgomery County State Attorney John McCarthy, Delegate Sara Love, and Senator Ariana Kelly to craft a bill that would help rectify this situation. It is an elegant fix to fix a gap. Why not, McCarthy suggested give some of the same protections to people in bike lanes and shoulders that exist for pedestrians in crosswalks across the state of Maryland?

The Sarah Debbink Langenkamp Memorial Safety Act ([HB0337](#) in the Maryland House and [SB0315](#) in the Senate) does just that, and a bit more. The penalties are modest -- up to 60 days in jail and a fine of up to \$2,000 for a person who causes a crash with a cyclist in a bike lane or shoulder. (The fine for crosswalks is slightly more modest, just \$1,000).

It is a far cry from the penalty we currently have for littering, but is it far better than the current law. And it sends an important signal to all drivers that bike lanes and shoulders are special-- *protected and safe* for cyclists.

There is a clear precedent for providing these protections. We create substantial penalties for drivers who speed in school zones, pass stopped school buses, or provide the same jail time for those who hit pedestrians in crosswalks. As a society we agree that it is not only cars who have a right to use our roads.

Sarah's death was a tragedy that has robbed our country of an extraordinary diplomat--a star of our generation of foreign service officers, and irreparably changed every minute of my family's present and future.

Her death was tragic, but it was not a fluke or an "accident." She was part of a thousands of "vulnerable road users" to die on U.S. roads in 2022, when more bikers were killed than since 1994 and when more pedestrians died than in 40 years, partially due to the fact that lines and sticker alone DON'T make bikers and pedestrians safer. Just like with school zones, you need law enforcement too--as well as safe speeds, safe drivers, safe vehicles, and safe road engineering.

We know that a stiff penalty alone for killing won't suddenly create zero deaths in Maryland. But with trends like these, we need to do something.

The roads of our industrialized peers' are getting safer and safer every year. Pedestrians are twice as likely to get killed on our roads than in Canada; they are four to six times more likely to be killed on our roads than in the safest counties, like Iceland and Singapore.

Sarah's bill says we care about more than just littering. We care about life, too.

HB337_FAV_AARP.pdf

Uploaded by: Karen Kalla

Position: FAV



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**HB337 Vehicle Laws—Bicycle Lanes and Shoulders – Yielding Right-of-Way -
(Sarah Debbink Langenkamp Memorial Act)**
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Support
February 22, 2024

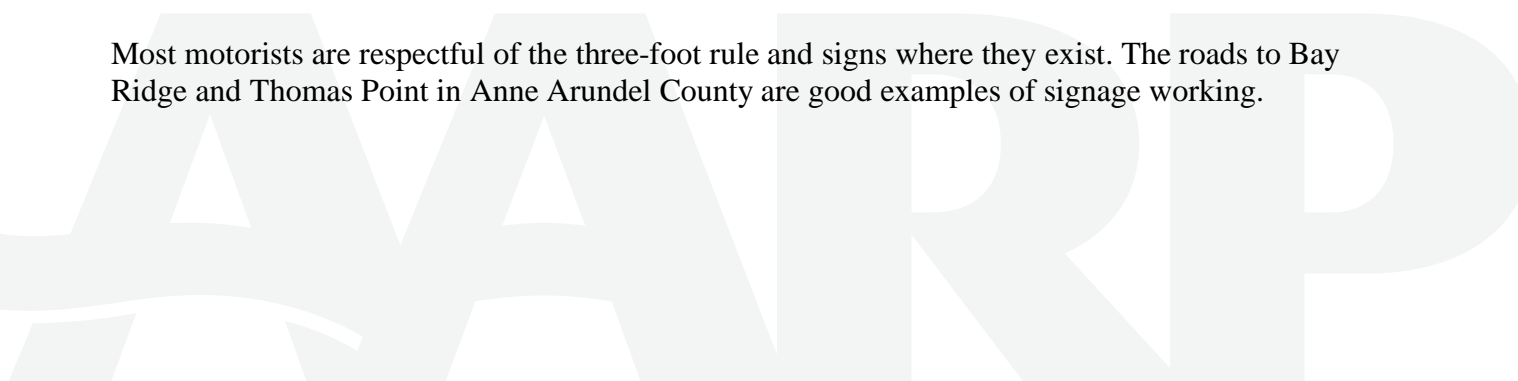
Good afternoon Chair Korman and members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee. I am Karen Kalla, volunteer legislative aide and member of the executive council for AARP Maryland, and resident of Montgomery County. AARP has more than 850,000 members statewide. AARP is the largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization representing the interests of Marylanders who are age 50 years and older and their families. Key priorities of our organization include creating livable and sustainable communities where individuals can affordably and safely age in place. On behalf of our 850,000 members, we support **HB337 Vehicle Laws – Bicycle Lanes and Shoulders – Yielding Right-of-Way – (Sarah Debbink Langenkamp Memorial Act)** and thank Delegates Love, Feldmark, Fraser-Hidalago, Kaufman, Lehman, Shetty, Solomon, Taveras, and Wolek for sponsoring this important legislation.

HB337 specifies that cars traveling on a road must allow three feet between them and a bicyclist unless road conditions do not allow that much space or the bicyclist veers into the three-foot space. The bill delineates a fine of no more than two months in prison and/or \$2,000.

As a bicyclist, who is 72 years old, I greatly appreciate this practice being established and enforced by legal parameters. I started bicycling as a child as many of us do. Upon graduating from high school, I worked two summers in Ocean City where a bike was my only means of transportation. Later in life, I would drive from my home in Rockville to Glen Echo or the C&O Canal to bicycle the rest of the 12 miles to my office near Capitol Hill. My partner and I have bicycled countless times the rural roads and mountains near Cumberland where he had a home – and the roads in Annapolis and Anne Arundel County where I had a home. We still bicycle the Rock Creek, Capital Crescent, and Mt. Vernon trails on a regular basis, or around town for pleasure.

I know what it feels like to bicycle on a road where three-foot rules are publicized by signs and where they don't exist or are not followed. I also know what it feels like to be intentionally blasted by black smoke from a passing truck – a practice known as 'rolling coal' where a diesel truck is altered to put out thick black smoke, often in the direction of cyclists, joggers, and electric cars. This too should be unlawful – but I digress.

Most motorists are respectful of the three-foot rule and signs where they exist. The roads to Bay Ridge and Thomas Point in Anne Arundel County are good examples of signage working.



Three feet is a small price to ask to protect a life. We need more of these practices and signs with strict accountability throughout the state. It does little good to tell drivers they need to respect and give space to bicyclers, then do nothing to hold them accountable when they do not.

Bicycling is an environmentally respectful way to travel for work or daily activities; it is a joyful and healthful pastime; and it reduces the number of cars on the roads. It also provides a healthy social activity for everyone – including seniors. Bicycling should be encouraged and supported in every way.

Bicyclist safety and accessibility are key elements in livable and sustainable communities. Maryland is experiencing the development of major Town Center communities that center on accessibility without cars – an admirable and necessary step. In this process, it is essential to promote the use of bicycles (and pedestrians) and ensure the safety of those who choose this mode of transportation. These individuals are contributing to a better quality of life for all by giving up their cars for shopping or pleasure. AARP appreciates the support that HB337 gives to those who would prefer to bicycle to the grocery store, doctor appointment, visit friends, or just enjoy a ride for its own pleasure.

AARP supports and advocates for increased mobility—safe and accessible infrastructure that provides a wide range of connected transportation options, including public transit, cycling, and walking. Another key aspect of this infrastructure is housing located within easy walking/bicycling distance of public transportation, grocery stores, and other shopping, healthcare, recreation, and cultural institutions.

HB337 offers important opportunities and guidance for enhancing bicycle safety and access for people of all ages to improve the quality of life in communities throughout the state and *enabling more people to comfortably age in place*. For these reasons we ask the House Environment and Transportation Committee to issue a favorable report on HB337. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Tammy Bresnahan at tbresnahan@aarp.org or by calling 410-302-8451.

2024-HB 337_ Memorial-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Nicholas Marks

Position: FAV



HB 337: Sarah Debbink Langenkamp Memorial Act
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Terps For Bike Lanes – FAVORABLE

February 16, 2024

Chair Korman and Committee Members,

I am writing this testimony on behalf of Terps For Bike Lanes to show our strong support for HB 337, a proposal aimed at enhancing road safety and promoting sustainable transportation. Our organization is dedicated to improving bicycle infrastructure in and around our campus to create a safe and inclusive environment. Our advocacy efforts span various areas, including the establishment of new bike lanes and paths, the enhancement and maintenance of existing bike facilities, and the development of bike infrastructure in areas where it is currently insufficient or absent. Terps for Bike Lanes believes in sustainability, accessibility, and equity as core values. Bike lanes not only promote environmental sustainability by offering an eco-friendly transportation option but also enhance accessibility and contribute to addressing economic disparities in marginalized communities. The bill is named after a Bethesda woman who was hit and killed by a flatbed truck while cycling home from a back-to-school event at her children's elementary school in August 2022. This is perhaps the most important bill we are providing testimony on this session.

Research supports the potential positive impact of increased penalties on road safety. According to "The Effect of Increased Penalties on Traffic Fatalities: A Meta-Analysis" by Jonah B. Gelblum, et al. (2016), tougher penalties can lead to reductions in traffic fatalities, although the magnitude of the effect varies across studies. Similarly, "The Impact of Harsher Penalties on Seat Belt Use and Traffic Fatalities" by David P. Chang (2020) focuses on seat belt laws and suggests that increasing penalties can be effective in improving compliance with traffic safety regulations. Moreover, the "Traffic Safety Cameras: Evidence for Effectiveness" report by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (2022) summarizes research on the effectiveness of red light cameras and speed cameras in reducing crashes and fatalities, suggesting a potential parallel impact for enforcing bike lane/shoulder right-of-way violations.

Understanding the vulnerability of road users is crucial for effective legislation. The "Vision Zero Network: Vulnerable Road Users" defines vulnerable road users and emphasizes the need for specific

protections due to their increased risk of injury or death in crashes. The "World Health Organization: Global Status Report on Road Safety 2020" highlights the disproportionate impact of road traffic crashes on vulnerable populations, including cyclists and pedestrians. Additionally, the "National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA): Cyclist Safety" resource provides data on cyclist fatalities and emphasizes the importance of infrastructure and enforcement for safety.

Examining specific legislative approaches is crucial for informed decision-making. "The Idaho Stop: Evaluating the Safety Effects of Allowing Bicycles to Treat Stop Signs as Yield Signs" by Peter Huang, et al. (2019) assesses the impact of the Idaho Stop law and finds no significant increase in crashes or injuries. Meanwhile, "Do Stricter Helmet Laws Save Lives? An Analysis of State-Level Data" by David P. Chang (2020) analyzes the impact of helmet laws on cyclist fatalities and finds mixed results, suggesting that other safety measures might be more effective. The "Vision Zero Network: Best Practices for Enforcing Bicycle Laws" outlines strategies for effective enforcement of bicycle laws, including dedicated patrols and specialized training for officers.

Considering the ethical implications of legislation is paramount. "Equity and Road Safety: Addressing the Disproportionate Impact of Traffic Crashes on Marginalized Communities" by The Equity Action Lab (2023) highlights the need for equitable enforcement of traffic laws and the potential for harsher penalties to disproportionately impact low-income communities. Additionally, "Procedural Justice and Traffic Enforcement: Promoting Fairness and Trust" by David A. Harris (2014) discusses the importance of procedural justice in traffic enforcement, ensuring fairness and avoiding discriminatory practices.

Penalties play a dual role as deterrents and motivators for education and driver vigilance, but their effectiveness hinges on adequacy. The existing penalties in Maryland for striking a bicyclist in a bike lane fall short in this regard. HB 337 aims to establish penalties commensurate with the level of harm caused by a driver who hits a bicyclist in a bike lane. By doing so, HB 337 is poised to fill the gap in deterrence and motivation that presently exists.

We believe that the proposed legislation aligns with these findings and will contribute significantly to the safety of vulnerable road users, promoting a more sustainable and equitable transportation system. We appreciate your consideration of this matter and look forward to the positive impact that HB 337 can have on our community. We urge a Favorable committee report on this legislation and encourage the House to pass it on the floor.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Marks

President, Terps For Bike Lanes

terps4bikelanes@gmail.com

HB 337 BBC Langenkamp Bill.pdf

Uploaded by: Nigel Samaroo

Position: FAV



HB 337: Vehicle Laws - Bike Lanes and Shoulders - Yielding Right-of-Way
(Sarah Debbink Langenkamp Memorial Act)
House Environment and Transportation Committee

Baltimore Bicycling Club – Favorable

February 22, 2024

Dear Chairman Korman, Vice-Chair Boyce, and Committee Members,

The Baltimore Bicycling Club (BBC) asks for your support of HB 337, the Sarah Debbink Langenkamp Memorial Act.

The Baltimore Bicycling Club (BBC) was established in 1968 and has a membership of over 1000 riders. The mission of our not-for-profit recreational organization is to promote and sponsor bicycling activities in Baltimore City and neighboring Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties. The BBC also promotes, defends, and protects the rights of bicyclists for a safe road riding environment in our communities through advocacy and education.

In 2022, eleven bicyclists were killed on our state's roadways, that same year, tragically, Sarah Langenkamp was one of those fatalities. Sarah and the others who were killed are not simply a statistic, they are mothers, fathers, children, grandparents, brothers and sisters. In 2023, preliminarily the number of bicyclists killed on our state's roadways was 15. Unfortunately, that number has not decreased.

Penalties on their own are not sufficient, but they can serve as a deterrent and a motivator for driver vigilance. Bike lanes like crosswalks are protected spaces for vulnerable road users (VRU), and drivers should exercise greater care and vigilance when a VRU is using that protected space, if not the penalties should be greater for a driver hitting a bicyclist in that protected space that is a designated bike lane.

HB0377 seeks to accomplish that by subjecting the individual who causes a crash with a bicyclist in a bicycle lane or shoulder to imprisonment of up to 2 months or a fine not to exceed \$2,000.00. Maryland saw 600 road fatalities in 2023, a number not seen since 2007, an alarming increase that necessitates something be done. We feel that HB0377 is a step in the right direction, and we urge a favorable report and House floor vote.

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to testify on this legislation.

Nigel Samaroo, MPH
Chair, Advocacy Committee
Baltimore Bicycling Club

HB0337 - TSO - Bike Lanes and Shoulders - Yielding

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: FAV

February 22, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
251 House Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

RE: Letter of Support – House Bill 337 – Vehicle Laws – Bike Lanes and Shoulders – Yielding Right-of-Way (Sarah Debbink Langenkamp Memorial Act)

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports House Bill 337 as a tool in changing driver behavior and protecting vulnerable road users.

House Bill 337 seeks to increase penalties for motorists responsible for seriously injuring or killing anyone lawfully riding, walking, or rolling in either a dedicated bicycle lane or a marked shoulder.

MDOT's top priority is safety and any life lost on our roadways is one too many. As such, MDOT considers the safety of all users when implementing enforcement strategies supported by the National Roadway Safety Strategy (NRSS) and the Safe System Approach. As Maryland works towards eliminating traffic-related serious injuries and deaths, MDOT is applying a data driven approach to shape the strategies and metrics that guide our safety programs. MDOT's programs are designed to help Maryland prioritize efforts to achieve zero deaths and serious injuries by 2030. Resources like the NRSS, 2050 Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, MVA's Strategic Highway safety Plan (SHSP), and MHSO's Crash Data Dashboard provide a clear vision for the State to equitably prioritize needs and improve the safety of all lawful roadway users in Maryland.

House Bill 337 is a way to recognize and honor the life of Ms. Langenkamp while also affirming the State's commitment to ensuring safe and responsible activity on our roadways.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee grant House Bill 337 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Pilar Helm
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090

HB 337 - Sarah Debbink Langenkamp Memorial Act Del

Uploaded by: Sara Love

Position: FAV



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 337 – Sarah Debbink Langenkamp Memorial Act

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, Members of Environment and Transportation –

On August 25, 2022, Sarah Debbink Langenkamp was struck and killed by the driver of a flatbed truck while riding her bike in a River Road bike lane in my District. A wife, mother, and diplomat who had just returned from the dangers in Ukraine, she was cycling home from an event at her children’s new elementary school in Bethesda when the fatal crash occurred. At the trial, the truck driver was sentenced to a fine of \$2,000 and 150 hours of community service, the maximum penalty allowed under current law. Sarah's husband, young children, parents, family, and friends were absolutely devastated by the sentence.

HB 337, the Sarah Debbink Langenkamp Memorial Act, addresses this injustice by imposing a stricter penalty on motorists who strike bicyclists. If convicted of causing a crash with a cyclist in a bike lane, a driver can receive a sentence of up to two months in jail and/or a fine of as much as \$2,000. The jail portion of the penalty aligns with current statute for hitting a pedestrian in a crosswalk (Transp. §21-502) and the fine portion aligns with the vulnerable road user statute (Transp. §21-901.3).

Unfortunately, the Langenkamps’ story is not unique. As Dan Langenkamp shared in a CNN interview, “I’ve tried to make sense of what happened to Sarah, and since I started looking into it, I’ve realized this is not a freakish accident... There’s an epidemic of traffic violence against people walking or biking.”¹ In Maryland alone, 2022 traffic crash data reveals 11 fatalities and 606 injuries involving cyclists.² With biking growing in popularity for health and environmental reasons, these numbers are likely to increase unless actions are taken.

By imposing stricter penalties, HB 337 sends the clear message that Maryland takes traffic crashes involving bicyclists seriously.

I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 337.

¹ <https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/19/us/sarah-langenkamp-ride-for-your-life-bike-safety/index.html>

² <https://zerodeathsmd.gov/resources/crashdata/>

2024-HB337-Langenkamp Memorial-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Seth Grimes

Position: FAV



HB 337: Vehicle Laws - Bike Lanes and Shoulders - Yielding Right-of-Way (Sarah Debbink Langenkamp Memorial Act)
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Washington Area Bicyclist Association – FAVORABLE

February 22, 2024

Chair Korman and Committee Members,

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) supports HB 337, the Sarah Debbink Langenkamp Memorial Act.

WABA is an advocacy organization with 1,200 Maryland members, founded in 1972. We fight for a just and sustainable transportation system where walking, biking, and transit are the best ways to get around.

Sarah Debbink Langenkamp was crushed by a truck driver while legally cycling in a bike lane on River Road, Maryland State Road 190, in August 2022. The driver, Santos Reyes Martinez, pleaded guilty but received only token penalties for the highly negligent driving that took Sarah's life.

Penalties serve as a deterrent and as a motivator for education and driver vigilance, but only when they are adequate. Current Maryland penalties for hitting a bicyclist in a bike lane are not adequate. HB 337 seeks to impose penalties proportionate to the severity of the violent harm inflicted by a driver who hits a bicyclist in a bike lane. HB 337 will provide the deterrence and motivation that is currently lacking.

Penalties alone, of course, are not sufficient. Eleven bicyclists were killed by drivers on Maryland roads in 2022, the year Sarah Langenkamp was killed. Fifteen bicyclists were killed on Maryland roads in 2023, an increase in four from the year before. Maryland pedestrian deaths increased from 130 in 2022 to 155 last year. To state that Maryland is making no progress towards meeting our Vision Zero commitment is an understatement. Our state's goal is zero road deaths and serious injuries by 2030, yet Maryland road violence is getting worse. The impact on Maryland families including Sarah Langenkamp's is devastating.

The Safe System approach calls for comprehensive improvements to eliminate traffic fatalities including safe road users, safe vehicles, safe speeds, safe roads, and post-crash care. WABA recognizes the role that safe infrastructure plays and works to win improved road design and engineering; expand the network of low-stress, protected bike lanes and trails; create safe pedestrian crossings; and encourage more equitable access to bicycling, via programs such as e-bike purchase rebates.

We appreciate that the State Highway Administration conducted a public safety walk and undertook a safety study for the stretch of MD 190 where Sarah Langenkamp was killed. However, that this response was reactive and so limited is disconcerting. The Administration and the General Assembly

must provide the attention, resources, and funding needed to create safe transportation infrastructure – in accordance with the Complete State Roads initiative that WABA launched last fall and with WABA’s 2022 Equitable Bikeways Investment proposal – coupled with penalty reform, to draw some redemption from the roads deaths of 304 pedestrians and bicyclists, including Sarah Debbink Langenkamp, on Maryland’s roads in just the last two years.

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association urges a Favorable HB 337 committee report and House floor vote.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this legislation.

Seth Grimes, WABA Maryland organizer
seth.grimes@waba.org

HB337 - Langenkamp Memorial Act - Pan-organization

Uploaded by: Seth Grimes

Position: FAV



HB337 – Vehicle Laws - Bike Lanes and Shoulders - Yielding Right-of-Way (Sarah Debbink Langenkamp Memorial Act)

House Environment & Transportation Committee

February 22, 2024

Position: Support

Greetings Chair and Members of the Committee

Our mission is to promote bicycling, increase safety, improve conditions, and provide a voice for bicyclists in Maryland. We partner with advocacy organizations to promote vulnerable road user safety legislation on the state and county level and work with government agencies, including police departments, to develop policy and awareness campaigns that protect the rights and well-being of bicyclists and pedestrians in Maryland.

We the undersigned represent multiple community-based organizations advocating for safe biking, walking and active transportation, submit this testimony on behalf of tens of thousands of members across the State of Maryland.

Sarah Debbink Langenkamp was crushed by a truck driver while legally cycling in a bike lane on River Road, Maryland State Road 190, in August 2022. The driver, Santos Reyes Martinez, pleaded guilty but received only token penalties for the highly negligent driving that took Sarah's life.

Penalties serve as a deterrent and as a motivator for education and driver vigilance, but only when they are adequate. Current Maryland penalties for hitting a bicyclist in a bike lane are not adequate. HB 337 seeks to impose penalties proportionate to the severity of the violent harm inflicted by a driver who hits a bicyclist in a bike lane. HB 337 will provide the deterrence and motivation that is currently lacking.

We urge the committee to support the passage of HB337.

Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis & Anne Arundel County (BikeAAA), Bike Maryland, Bikemore, Bike HoCo, East Coast Greenway Alliance, Frederick Bicycle Coalition, Terps for Bike Lanes, Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA), Worcester County Bike and Pedestrian Coalition

HB337 Testimony Othman revised.pdf

Uploaded by: Ronza Othman

Position: FWA

Subject: Revised Testimony: Favorable with amendments HB337 Bike Lanes and Bike Shoulders – Yielding Right-Of-Way (Sarah Debbink Langenkamp Memorial Act)

Date: February 22, 2024

To: House Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

Ronza Othman, President

National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

15 Charles Plaza, #3002, Baltimore, MD 21201

Phone: 443-426-4110

Email: President@nfbmd.org

Amendment One: On page two, after line 17, add a new section “E” that states, “The driver of a vehicle that is entering and/or stopping in a bicycle lane for the purposes of loading or unloading a passenger with a disability has the right-of-way and is permitted to use the bicycle lane for this purpose.”

Amendment Two: On page two, after line 19, add “or harm a person with a disability who is trying to find and enter a vehicle or exit a vehicle in a bike lane or shoulder.”

Reasons for the Amendments: Blind people and others with disabilities have great difficulty when trying to enter or exit a vehicle when vehicles are not permitted to load and unload such passengers directly next to the curb, where some bike lanes are placed. A blind person, for example, may have to cross the bike lane and several lanes of moving traffic to get to the vehicle attempting to load them. They then have to load on the side of the vehicle where there is moving traffic because there is no curb cut. Blind and low vision individuals have been injured or nearly injured because passenger vehicles that load and unload them are not able to pull up to where they are. HB337 is a good bill because it provides protection for individuals riding a bicycle, EPAMD, or motor scooter, but it will continue to cause harm to blind individuals because bike lanes have created a barrier to those individuals safely entering and exiting vehicles such as mobility vehicles and rideshare and others that transport them. Blind people who are trying to find and enter a vehicle or exit a vehicle need protection just as much as the riders of a bicycle or other devices.

The National Federation of the Blind of Maryland passed a resolution at the 2024 convention, which states, in relevant part:

“WHEREAS, ... bicycle lanes are often the closest lanes to the curb, even where there is a curb cut for wheelchair access, and are further bounded on the street side by parking lanes or even lanes of moving traffic, forcing the blind and other people with mobility issues to traverse the bicycle lane and then navigate through parked cars or moving traffic to board the above-mentioned conveyances, and often forcing them to do so while avoiding oncoming traffic because they cannot access the opposite curb; and

WHEREAS, in situations where the operators of vehicles try to aid their blind or disabled passengers by temporarily pulling into the bicycle lane to allow these passengers to board, they are often fined by law enforcement for improperly using the bicycle lane, thus discouraging them from accommodating their passengers; and

WHEREAS, although bicyclists and other users of the bicycle lanes are required by law to yield to blind people using white canes or guide dogs and other pedestrians, they often fail to do so because they wrongly assume that their conveyances take priority over pedestrian access; and

WHEREAS, all of these impediments to disability access not only endanger the safety of blind people, wheelchair users, other individuals with disabilities, and pedestrians, but also constitute flagrant disregard for the rights of individuals with disabilities as enshrined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Maryland White Cane Law, and other statutes...”

Please give a favorable report to HB337 only if the amendments reference herein are added.

HB337 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Sharon Maneki

Position: FWA

Subject: Favorable with amendments HB337 Bike Lanes and Bike Shoulders – Yielding Right-Of-Way (Sarah Debbink Langenkamp Memorial Act)

Date: February 22, 2024

To: House Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

Ronza Othman, President

National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

15 Charles Plaza, #3002, Baltimore, MD 21201

Phone: 443-426-4110

Email: President@nfbmd.org

Amendment One: On page two, after line 17, add “Drivers must also yield the right-of-way to vehicles that are trying to load or unload persons with disabilities.”

Amendment Two: On page two, after line 19, add “or harm a person with a disability who is trying to find and enter a vehicle or exit a vehicle in a bike lane or shoulder.”

Reasons for the Amendments: Blind people and others with disabilities have great difficulty when trying to enter or exit a vehicle that is in a bike lane or shoulder. HB337 is a good bill because it provides protection for individuals riding a bicycle, EPAMD, or motor scooter. It can be a better bill if it is amended as suggested by the National Federation of the Blind. Blind people who are trying to find and enter a vehicle or exit a vehicle need protection just as much as the riders of a bicycle or other devices.

Please vote in favor of the amended HB337.

HB0337.pdf

Uploaded by: Suzanne Duffy

Position: UNF

Another BAD BILL HB0337, MORE government overreach in the name of public "safety".

SAY NO to this government overreach.

Suzanne Price

AACo