



## HB0111

### **Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles - Authorizations and Requirements Testimony before Environmental and Transportation Committee**

**Hearing February 1, 2024, 1:00 pm**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

Committee Chair Sen. Jones, Vice Chair Boyce, and members of the committee, my name is Elizabeth Fixsen, and I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today in support of HB0111, providing that bicycles, play vehicles, and unicycles be allowed to drive on pedestrian sidewalks unless prohibited by the local municipality.

Maryland law 21-1103 currently prohibits people, including children, from riding bicycles and similar vehicles such as scooters on sidewalks unless the local jurisdiction expressly permits it by ordinance. Montgomery and Howard Counties have long had such ordinances. HB0111 would flip the terms statewide to presumptively allow such usage unless expressly prohibited by the local jurisdiction. The bill provides for pedestrian safety by requiring bicycles, etc. to yield the right-of-way to pedestrians and persons in wheelchairs or other electric person mobility assistive devices.

Allowing bicycling on sidewalks also advances equity. Many lower-income individuals rely on a bicycle for trips to work, school, shopping, and other destinations. Many others bike for fitness and recreation, but they live and travel in areas that lack safe bikeways.

The threat of climate change demands that all of us do our part to reduce the use of fossil fuels. When individuals use bicycles as a mode of transportation instead of cars, fossil fuel usage is reduced. However, riding bicycles in street traffic can be dangerous. Allowing riders to use the sidewalks keeps them safer and provides an incentive for bicycle usage.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

**We respectfully urge a favorable report.**

Elizabeth Fixsen  
Savage, MD