

MedChi

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TO: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
Members, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
The Honorable Mike McKay

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
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DATE: February 22, 2024

RE: **OPPOSE** – Senate Bill 503 – *Vehicle Laws – Protective Headgear Requirement – Exception (In Remembrance of Gary “Pappy” Boward)*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), the largest physician organization in Maryland, **opposes** Senate Bill 503.

Senate Bill 503 proposes to make certain exceptions to the current motorcycle helmet law provided an individual is at least 21 years old and has been licensed to operate a motorcycle for at least 2 years, has taken an approved motorcycle rider safety course, or is a passenger on a motorcycle operated by an individual who has been licensed for 2 years or has taken an approved safety course.

The opponents to Maryland’s motorcycle helmet requirements have tried to repeal the requirements for a number of years under different proposed exceptions, to no avail. Senate Bill 503 is clearly aimed at the same objective in a manner that appears to respond to concerns about rider safety.

There is no ambiguity in the data related to the benefits of mandatory helmet laws. In Maryland, the incidence of injury and death decreased dramatically following the passage of the current helmet requirements. No benefit can be gained by putting individuals at risk just because they may have been licensed for more than 2 years or have taken an approved safety course. For these reasons, we urge an unfavorable report.