

HB0364WrayTestimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Brendan Wray

Position: FAV

HB 364: Prince George's County - Stop Sign Monitoring Systems
Judicial Proceedings Committee
Brendan Wray - FAVORABLE

March 25, 2024

Chair and Committee Members,

We know the terrible toll that reckless and negligent driving has taken on Prince George's County residents and visitors, including in the November 20 deaths of 5-year-old Sky Sosa and 10-year-old Shalom Mbah, who were hit by a motor vehicle and killed near their elementary school in Riverdale Park. Prince George's County experienced 129 road fatalities 2023 including 39 pedestrians and 3 bicyclists, by far the worst record in the state. This road carnage must end.

The State of Maryland and Prince George's County must increase their investments in safe transportation infrastructure and at the same time, we must do all we can to educate drivers and provide an incentive for safe driving, via expanded, appropriate traffic enforcement. HB364 would add a safe-streets enforcement tool to the Prince George's County's toolbox.

I note that automated enforcement is far more equitable— and inexpensive and scalable— than in-person police enforcement, with no potential for dangerous escalation of traffic stops or discrimination against Black and brown drivers.

Please advance HB364, to promote safe streets, Vision Zero, and equitable enforcement, and in the blessed memories of Sky Sosa and Shalom Mbah. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this legislation.

Brendan Wray
College Park, MD

HB 364 JPR Behrend Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Dan Behrend

Position: FAV

Maryland Senate
Judicial Proceedings Committee
Annapolis, MD 21401

March 25, 2024

Re: HB 364 – Support

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee,

I am a resident of District 22 in Prince George’s County, Maryland. I volunteer with several organizations and local committees working to make our streets safer for every person who travels in our county. As a resident of Riverdale Park, I am especially heartbroken and enraged by the preventable deaths of two of my neighbors, 5-year-old Sky Sosa and 10-year-old Shalom Mbah, as they walked across the street, in a marked crosswalk, at a four-way stop, to reach Riverdale Elementary School this fall.

Car crashes kill far too many people in Prince George’s County. Even greater numbers of people experience serious, life-altering injuries. Prince George’s County has the unwanted distinction of leading Maryland and the Washington, DC region in traffic fatalities every year.

These deaths and serious injuries are preventable. We need improved, safer road design. However, a safe transportation system also relies on compliance with traffic control devices. Enforcement of stop signs, therefore, plays an important role in increasing safety.

Local governments in Prince George’s County desperately need access to more tools to keep the public safe on our streets. By authorizing automated enforcement of stop signs, HB 364 provides local government access to additional tools to increase safety, save lives, and spare people and their families from experiencing the impacts of life-altering injuries.

Based on data currently available for 2023¹, Prince George’s County accounted for over 20% of the traffic fatalities, and nearly 25% of fatalities among people walking and biking, for all of Maryland (see Table 1 below). These rates far exceed the county’s share of the state’s population (15.7%). They also far exceed the rates of fatalities in peer jurisdictions in the state, with larger populations, like Montgomery County.

Prince George’s County’s also leads the Washington, DC region in traffic fatalities annually (see Chart 1 below). The county experiences fatalities among people walking and biking at twice the rate as peer jurisdictions in the DC region.

Again, our county badly needs more tools to develop and operate a safe transportation system. The Maryland General Assembly can help by authorizing local governments to use automated enforcement to enforce compliance with stop signs.

I strongly **support HB 364** and urge the committee to report **favorable** on the bill.

Thank you,

Dan Behrend
Riverdale Park, MD
Prince George’s County

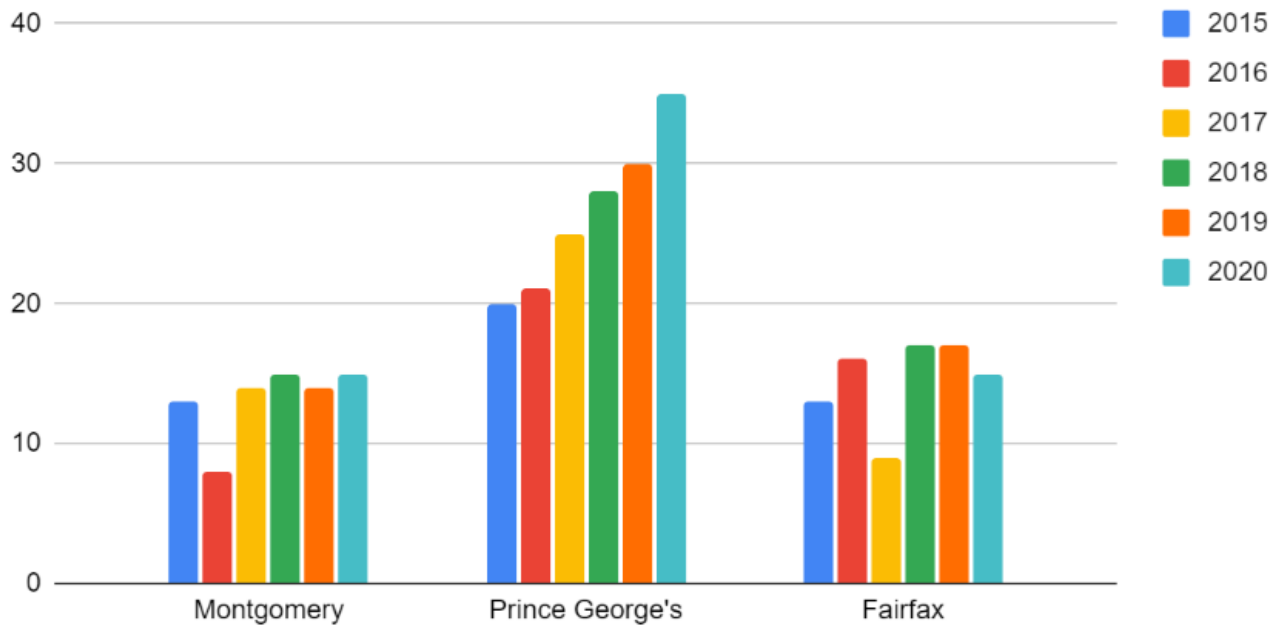
¹ <https://zerodeathsmd.gov/resources/crashdata/>

Table 1. 2023 Statewide, Prince George’s & Montgomery County Fatal Crashes

| 2023 Statewide Crash Data | | |
|---------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|
| | Fatalities | Pedestrians & Bicyclists Fatalities |
| Statewide | 604 | 170 |
| Prince George’s County | 129 | 42 |
| Montgomery County | 44 | 16 |

Chart 1. Prince George’s County Experiences Twice the Rate of Pedestrian Fatalities Compared to Peer Jurisdictions in the Washington, DC Region

Pedestrian Fatalities, 2015 to 2020



Source: FARS, TPB Safety Committee

Friends of the GET HB 0364 FAVORABLE .pdf

Uploaded by: Jeff Lemieux

Position: FAV

Jeff Lemieux, President
Friends of the Greenbelt East Trail, Inc.
www.greenbeltnasatrail.org
Greenbelt, MD

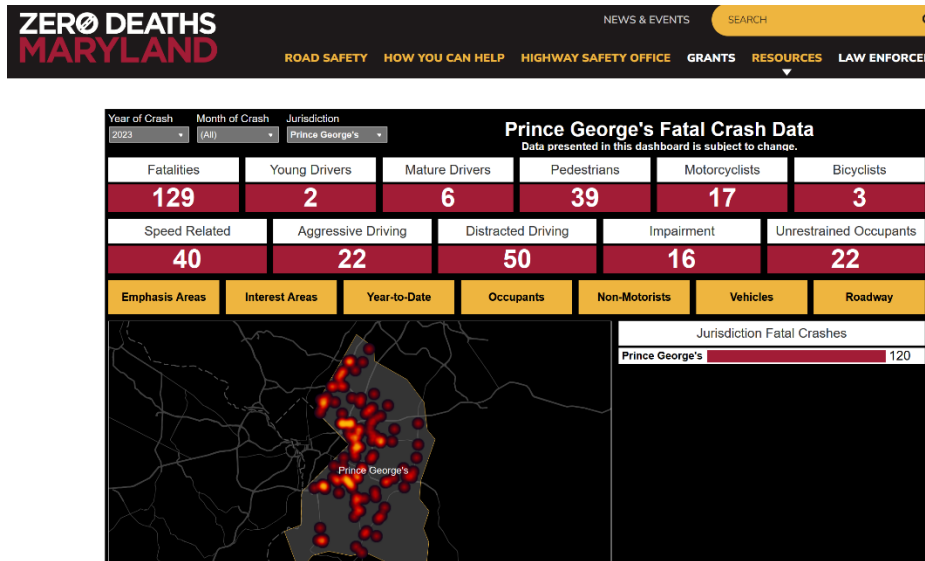
6 February 2024

HB 0364 (Prince George's delegation) FAVORABLE

Dear Committee Chair and Members,

Friends of the Greenbelt East Trail is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving safety and accessibility for all residents and road users along Greenbelt Road (MD Route 193) between Greenbelt and Glenn Dale MD. Our organization supports the use of additional automated traffic control enforcement in Prince George's County.

Compared with neighboring Montgomery and Anne Arundel counties, Prince George's County had triple the number of fatalities from crashes in 2023: 129 fatalities from 120 crashes, including 40 deaths related to speed, 22 to aggressive driving, and 50 to distraction (see chart from ZeroDeathsMD.gov). At least two of those 2023 deaths occurred along the route of our proposed trail, including a 4-year-old child and a pedestrian.



Source: www.zerodeathsmd.gov

Anecdotally, I have observed a complete absence of police enforcement in recent years. For whatever reason – whether to reduce unfair profiling of drivers, or in the interest of police officers' safety – the lack of live officer traffic enforcement is simply a fact in our county in 2024. And drivers know it. Driving actions that used to be taboo, such as running full red lights and stop signs without slowing, or passing aggressively on shoulders or across double yellow lines, or making U-turns across multiple lanes of traffic, are now far too frequent.

Additional automated enforcement will be necessary, along with traffic calming engineering -- such as the Greenbelt East Trail we've proposed -- to reduce number of traffic deaths in our county, and we thank Del. Healey for leading our county delegation's effort to improve safety on our roads.

Thank you,
Jeff Lemieux, Friends of the Greenbelt East Trail

HB0364 For Senate - Traffic Control Device Monitor

Uploaded by: Joseph Jakuta

Position: FAV

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Testimony on: HB 364 - “Traffic Control Device Monitoring Systems – Authorization”

Organization: Climate Parents of Prince George’s

Person Submitting: Joseph Jakuta, Lead Volunteer

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: March 26, 2024



Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

Thank you for considering our testimony to HB 364 - **“Traffic Control Device Monitoring Systems – Authorization.”** Climate Parents is a campaign to reduce climate change-causing pollution in our schools, and our group is active in Prince George’s County. In particular, we recently worked directly with Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS) technical staff and other advocates to develop a first in the nation School Climate Change Action Plan. This Climate Change Action Plan was adopted unanimously by the PGCPS Board of Education in April of 2022.

Walking to school is a great option for a more sustainable, healthier learning environment. When students walk to school, they are more active, and physical activity has been shown to be related to improved educational outcomes.¹

When it comes to Elementary Schools, in Prince George’s County, students are not guaranteed bus service if they live within 1½ miles of school. Middle and high school students face the same issue, but they have a 2-mile walking radius. If these students don’t walk or bike, they wind up getting dropped off by car, which increases air pollution at school entrances, as well as greenhouse gas emissions.

Walking is one of the best options for students to access schools if they don’t have bus access, but we learned through surveys that were conducted when formulating the PGCPS Climate Change Action Plan that one of the main barriers is the fear that walking isn’t safe. Our community was reminded that we aren’t ensuring our students’ safety on their walks to school by the tragedy at Riverdale Elementary School on November 20, 2023.

While no solution is perfect, one of the best ways to change harmful behavior is to know that punishment is quick and certain, and traffic cameras do just that when it comes to dangerous driving. An added benefit is that traffic cameras do not discriminate; they simply record when a vehicle breaks the law and a ticket is mailed. HB 364 will allow for such enforcement when it comes to a stop sign behavior, and we favor that.

I know from my personal experience walking my kids to our bus stop in the morning just how bad the traffic scofflaws are. Drivers stop at the crosswalk rather than at the stop sign. They drive through stop signs without stopping, zip past the bus with the stop sign out while it is loading, and, worst of all, drive into oncoming traffic to go around the cars that are patiently waiting for the bus to load.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/facts.htm>; Tomporowski PD, Davis CL, Miller PH, Naglieri JA. Exercise and Children's Intelligence, Cognition, and Academic Achievement. *Educ Psychol Rev.* 2008 Jun 1;20(2):111-131. Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2748863/>; <https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/17-02-2021-who-reviews-effect-of-physical-activity-on-enhancing-academic-achievement-at-school>

This dangerous driving will not change without swift and certain enforcement, and our children will continue to face excessive danger by simply trying to walk to school. This must change, and HB 364 will be a great step forward to a safer, healthier world for our children.

We encourage a **FAVORABLE** report for this legislation.

HB 0364 JPR MSchweisguth stop sign cameras 2.pdf

Uploaded by: Melissa Schweisguth

Position: FAV

Melissa Schweisguth

Hyattsville, MD 20782

25 March 2024

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Committee Members,

Thank you for your work and for considering public input on current legislation. I am a resident of Prince George's County and am writing to ask that you provide a favorable report for HB0364, which proposes automated camera enforcement at stop signs in Prince George's County. This bill passed the House and requires passage in the Senate to be enacted. Your favorable report is needed to make that happen.

Delegate Healey previously proposed this measure as a State bill because many constituents have complained about stop sign running and other similar traffic violations, and both residents and municipalities have asked to legalize cameras for traffic signals such as stop signs. There is clearly demand and support for this measure in Prince George's county. When I am out running, cycling, walking and driving in Prince George's County, I repeatedly see drivers treat stop signs like yield signs, rolling through them. On several occasions drivers rolled through a stop sign while I was in the crosswalk, resulting in a scary near miss.

Unsafe driving is a continued problem and Prince George's county has the highest traffic fatalities in the State. We need better enforcement to reach Vision Zero and protect our most vulnerable road users, including children, the elderly, those with visual or mobility impairments, cyclists, etc. We need more tools besides the currently allowed speed and red light cameras to ensure safety in all areas (e.g., residential, business, school, etc.) for all road users. Stop sign cameras will provide a critical tool to save lives. This bill is urgently needed to help stop pedestrian crashes like the death of two young children crossing the street at a stop-sign controlled intersection at Riverdale Park Elementary School in the Fall of 2022. Automated enforcement also is more efficient than the current system whereby police sit and wait for people to run a stop sign and removes the risk of traffic stops becoming deadly, reversing an unfortunate trend in our country that has disproportionately affected people of color

Prince George's county is ready for stop sign cameras as DC has them, so many drivers in the county are familiar with them. Harmonizing traffic enforcement approaches across the DC metro area makes sense. DC's cameras also indicate the high rate of failure to stop at stop signs. From Jan-Sept 2022, DC's eight stop sign cameras recorded 120,000 violations, more than 1,650 violations per camera per month.

Fair and efficient enforcement makes our roads safer for all - pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. Please provide a favorable report for HB0364 to meet continued demand for such measures, and the safer streets they create.

Thank you,

Melissa A Schweisguth

HB 364 PG Co Senators Amendment

Uploaded by: Senator Michael Jackson

Position: FAV



HB0364/833521/1

AMENDMENTS
PREPARED
BY THE
DEPT. OF LEGISLATIVE
SERVICES

21 MAR 24
10:27:08

BY: Prince George's County Senators
(To be offered in the Judicial Proceedings Committee)

AMENDMENT TO HOUSE BILL 364
(Third Reading File Bill)

On page 7, strike beginning with "(I)" in line 20 down through "(II)" in line 22.

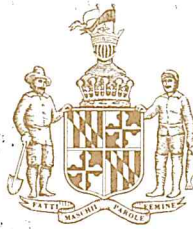
HB 364 Stop Sign Monitoring Ststems - Authorizatio

Uploaded by: Senator Michael Jackson

Position: FAV

MICHAEL A. JACKSON
CHAIR

RON WATSON, PH.D.
VICE CHAIR



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JOANNE C. BENSON
NICK CHARLES
C. ANTHONY MUSE
JIM ROSAPEPE
ALONZO T. WASHINGTON

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY SENATE DELEGATION

March 21, 2024

Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Smith:

Please let this letter serve as official notice of the support of the Prince George's County Senate Delegation for House Bill 364 (Prince George's County – Stop Sign Monitoring Systems – Authorization PG 301-24) with the attached amendment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Michael A. Jackson", written in a cursive style.

Senator Michael A. Jackson, Chair
Prince George's County Senate Delegation



HB0364/833521/1

AMENDMENTS
PREPARED
BY THE
DEPT. OF LEGISLATIVE
SERVICES

21 MAR 24
10:27:08

BY: Prince George's County Senators
(To be offered in the Judicial Proceedings Committee)

AMENDMENT TO HOUSE BILL 364
(Third Reading File Bill)

On page 7, strike beginning with “(I)” in line 20 down through “(II)” in line 22.

2024-HB364-Prince George's County – Stop Sign Moni

Uploaded by: Seth Grimes

Position: FAV



Prince George's County – Stop Sign Monitoring Systems – Authorization – PG
301-24
Judicial Proceedings Committee
Washington Area Bicyclist Association – FAVORABLE

March 26, 2024

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Committee Members,

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA), an advocacy organization with 1,200 Maryland members, supports HB 364, which would authorize the use of stop sign monitoring systems in school zones in Prince George's County.

We know the terrible toll that reckless and negligent driving has taken on Prince George's County residents and visitors, including in the November 20 deaths of 5-year-old Sky Sosa and 10-year-old Shalom Mbah, who were hit by a motor vehicle and killed near their elementary school in Riverdale Park. Prince George's County experienced 129 road fatalities in 2023 including 39 pedestrians and 3 bicyclists, by far the worst record in the state. This road carnage must end.

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HB 364 would add a safe-streets enforcement tool to the Prince George's County's toolbox.

We note that automated enforcement is far more equitable – and inexpensive and scalable – than in-person police enforcement, with no potential for dangerous escalation of traffic stops or discrimination against Black and brown drivers.

Please advance HB 364, to promote safe streets, Vision Zero, and equitable enforcement, and in the blessed memories of Sky Sosa and Shalom Mbah.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this legislation.

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

HB0364 - SHA - PGC - Traffic Control Monitoring De

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: INFO

March 26, 2024

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 364 – Prince George’s County – Stop Sign Monitoring Systems – Authorization PG 301-24

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) offers the following information on House Bill 364 for the Committee’s consideration.

House Bill 364 authorizes, for Prince George’s County, the use of stop sign monitoring systems in school zones to capture violations¹ of § 21-707 of the Transportation Article on (1) highways maintained by a local jurisdiction, if authorized by the governing body of the local jurisdiction, and (2) State highways, if authorized by the State Highway Administration (SHA). The bill provides for the operation of the stop sign monitoring systems and enforcement of violations through these systems. As amended, the bill provides that not more than 10 stop sign monitoring systems may be placed in the county, and it requires Prince George’s County to prioritize placement of these systems within municipalities that have the highest rates of violations.

The State Highway Administration (SHA) notes for the Committee that the proposed operation and enforcement structure of House Bill 364 resembles other forms of automated enforcement currently authorized for use in the State. However, unlike those other forms of automated enforcement, which are limited to enforcement of very specific elements of the Maryland Vehicle Law (such as speeding in a work zone or through a school district), obedience to a stop sign, like other traffic control devices, includes several defenses – the device may be illegible, or a law enforcement officer may direct the driver to disobey the device. As such, there is the potential for a high rate of errors with this type of enforcement. Alternatively, significant review of captured images may be required prior to issuing a citation.

Another unique factor in the structure of House Bill 364 compared to other forms of automated enforcement codified in State law is that House Bill 364 establishes a general authorization for Prince George’s County to use stop sign monitoring systems on State highways located in school zones throughout the County, if authorized by SHA. SHA would need to review plans and technical documents from the County for these requests, issue permits, and place signs notifying drivers that traffic control device monitoring systems are in use on State highways.

¹ For the purpose of House Bill 364, the violation would be a failure to come to a complete stop a stop sign.

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.

Page Two

Because of the investment of State resources necessary to manage these requests and the subsequent signing for approved projects, SHA must take steps to recover costs from the County or agency for any systems it approves, permits it issues, and signs it is required to place. Additionally, the bill as drafted directs any amount remaining from the fines collected, after cost recovery, to the local jurisdiction for public safety purposes, including pedestrian safety programs. While SHA supports the goal of directing the fines to public safety enhancements, money from fines collected on State highways would be distributed to local jurisdictions and is not guaranteed to be used to address public safety needs on the roads where the violations occurred. Practically, funds collected on State roads should be retained by or directed to the State to improve safety on State roads. This will ensure a unified response, where both State and local roads are improved to ensure the safety of Marylanders within the county, whatever the mode their transportation takes.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating House Bill 364.

Sincerely,

Matt Mickler
Deputy Director (Acting)
Office of Policy and Research
Maryland State Highway Administration
410-545-5629

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