

March 4, 2024

To:

Honorable Delegate Marc Korman, Chair
Honorable Delegate Regina T. Boyce, Vice Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee
Maryland General Assembly
House Office Building, Room 251
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

From:

Mindy Badin, Transportation Committee
Greater Olney Civic Association

In support of Bill #HB 1111 - Criminal Law – Reckless Endangerment – Use of Motor Vehicle

Dear Chair Korman and Vice Chair Boyce:

The Greater Olney Civic Association and I are in strong support of Bill #HB 1111 - Criminal Law – Reckless Endangerment – Use of Motor Vehicle

Four years ago, my son Brett died while trying to cross the street. I have been advocating for safer streets since.

On October 18, on hearing the news of what happened to Sgt. Patrick Kepp of MCPD, I first felt concern and anxiety for this outstanding police officer. As I learned more about the circumstances of the events that occurred, the anger inside me grew. Sgt. Kepp is 36 years old, the same age my son Brett would be if he were still alive. Somehow this fact made me even more concerned about Sgt. Kepp. The accused was a known entity to the police force, given the many times in the past he has driven recklessly at very high speeds, and his taunting of officers - endangering lives.

This man previously had his license taken away.

Reckless or impaired drivers need to pay the price of endangering our communities.

We need to widen the definition of reckless driving. We need to make the penalties greater. We need to make it apparent that there will be consequences to reckless drivers by punishing them to the greatest extent possible.

Reckless and drunk drivers are responsible for a growing number of fatal crashes in our state.

Looking at the Maryland Crash Data Dashboard, in 2023, 161 roadway deaths are attributable to speed, 69 deaths to aggressive driving, and 113 deaths to impaired driving. It should not take so many roadway deaths plus an almost fatal, intentional crash to tighten our laws. But unfortunately too many people are paying the price with their lives or their injuries to make our laws stronger. It need not be this way. Pass HB 1111 now to prevent more tragedies on our Maryland roads.

The Greater Olney Civic Association and I, personally, applaud these efforts by Delegate Wims to increase the penalties for those that would do harm by aggressive and reckless driving. And we wish Sgt. Kepp only the best as he continues his recovery at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

Sincerely,

Mindy Badin

On Behalf of the Greater Olney Civic Association