

Subject: Favorable with Amendment HB 178: Prohibition to Stopping, Standing, or Parking in a Bike Lane

Date: January 30, 2025

From: National Federation of the Blind of Maryland
15 Charles Plaza, #3002
President@nfbmd.org

To: House Environment and Transportation Committee

On Page 2, line 12, add “Unless the vehicle is loading or unloading an individual with a disability.”

The Members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland urge the members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee to support the amended HB0178, a bill to regulate traffic in a bike lane.

The proliferation of bike lanes, while beneficial in numerous ways including to the environment, has caused tremendous challenges for individuals with disabilities who now experience difficulty and even unsafe conditions as they attempt to move about their communities. As a result of the installation of bike lanes against the curb of many streets, individuals with disabilities can no longer safely or without fear of penalty load buses or passenger vehicles from the curb. Instead, they need to cross through the bike lane and stand along or even cross moving traffic lanes to get to a vehicle to load or unload them.

Members of the blind community have had many near misses due to this practice, and drivers need to feel safe pulling up to the curb to load and unload passengers with disabilities. A blind individual should not have to risk their safety to cross moving traffic lanes. An individual in a wheelchair should not have to load a vehicle on the same side as moving traffic lanes because a bike lane pushed the loading and unloading zone across the street. Blind individuals should not have their canes broken by moving traffic as they wait to hopefully find a clear path to cross to the opposite street to get to a waiting Uber or Lyft.

This amendment preserves the integrity of the bike lane and also preserves the right of those with disabilities to safely and independently move about their communities.

Please vote yes on the amended HB0178.

For questions, please contact Ronza Othman at President@nfbmd.org or at 443-426-4110.