

Councilmember Luedtke HB 744 Pro.docx.pdf

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Position: FAV



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

DAWN LUEDTKE
COUNCILMEMBER
DISTRICT 7

February 13, 2025

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, Environment & Transportation Committee
Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: House Bill 744, *Motor Vehicles - Reckless, Negligent, and Aggressive Driving*

Dear Chair Korman,

I urge the Committee to support House Bill 744, Motor Vehicles - Reckless, Negligent, and Aggressive Driving, which increases the penalties for certain dangerous driving behaviors and provides enhanced tools for dealing with repeat violators of Maryland's vehicle law. Although a similar bill was introduced during the 2024 legislative session, the version introduced this year is more strategically tailored to address the repeated dangerous behaviors we see across Maryland's roadways on a regular basis.

Driving is a privilege, not a right. When a person drives recklessly, negligently, or aggressively, they jeopardize their safety as well as the safety of other motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists. This flagrant behavior merits application of these increased consequences in order to deter future violations. Many residents are fearful of the danger they face daily on and adjacent to Maryland's roadways, including, but not limited to, speeding, distracted driving, and excessive noise. At community meetings, listening sessions, and constituent correspondence residents consistently raise concerns and request assistance with ways to better deter the adverse behaviors.

According to the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), "Speeding is a significant aggressive driving behavior and is estimated to be a contributing factor in over one-third of all fatal crashes nationwide. The probability of death or serious injury grows with impacts at higher speeds - doubling for every 10 MPH over 50 MPH that a vehicle travels."¹

¹ <https://zerodeathsmd.gov>

While the General Assembly took positive steps to address roadway safety during the 2024 session, we need to push further with the actions in this bill, including:

- Changing penalties for negligent driving from 1 point to 2 points;
- Changing the penalty for speeding in excess of 30 MPH over the posted speed limit from 5 points to 6 points;
- Creating a per se standard of reckless driving at 30 MPH over the posted speed limit;
- Adding as a penalty for reckless driving an option of imprisonment not exceeding 60 days in addition to the fine of up to \$1,000 so that it is a must appear offense;
- Increasing the fine for negligent driving to \$750;
- Reducing the number of offenses that must be committed in one single course of driving conduct from three to two for aggressive driving;
- Expanding the list of traffic violations that qualify for aggressive driving to include more provisions of the existing vehicle code particularly as pertains to offenses impacting pedestrian and cyclist safety.

I respectfully ask the committee for a favorable report to provide appropriate tools for greater deterrence and accountability for those who engage in dangerous driving behaviors that pose incredible safety risks to our communities and adversely impact reaching our Vision Zero goals.

Very truly yours,



Dawn Luedtke
Montgomery County Councilmember
District 7

cc: Members of the Environment & Transportation Committee

SafeRoadsMD Supports HB 0744.pdf

Uploaded by: John Seng

Position: FAV



**PLEASE SUPPORT
HB 0744**

“Motor Vehicles - Reckless,
Negligent, and Aggressive Driving”

**MARYLAND COALITION FOR ROADWAY SAFETY, INC.
URGES MD HOUSE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE SUPPORT FOR HB 0744**

February 11, 2025

TO:

Honorable Delegate Marc Korman, Chair
Delegate Regina T. Boyce, Vice Chair
250 & 251 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

FROM:

John Seng, Chair
SafeRoadsMD - Maryland Coalition for Roadway Safety, Inc.
(202) 468-7682, JSeng@SafeRoadsMD.org
SafeRoadsMD.org

Subject: Urgent Need for Stronger Enforcement Against Distracted Driving – Support HB 0744

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce and Members of the Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee:

On behalf of SafeRoadsMD, I write to strongly encourage a **favorable review of House Bill 0744 (HB 0744)**, a vital new instrument of legislation aimed at **strengthening Maryland’s traffic laws to prevent reckless, negligent, and aggressive driving.**

This bill builds upon last year’s efforts to address the **devastating injuries suffered by Montgomery County Police Sgt. Patrick Kepp**, who was struck by a driver engaging in **criminally reckless behavior** in 2023. While previous legislation sought to tackle this issue, **HB 0744 is a refined and technically superior version** that enhances **accountability, enforcement, and road safety for all Marylanders.**



Sgt. Patrick Kepp’s prosthetic legs (WUSA9)

The Urgency of HB 0744

As incidents of reckless, negligent, and aggressive driving continue to rise, Maryland must take a strong stance against dangerous behaviors that endanger motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists. HB 0744 takes a necessary and major step toward stronger enforcement and deterrence by updating and expanding Maryland's traffic laws to make our roads safer.

This bill ensures that reckless drivers face real consequences while giving law enforcement the tools they need to address dangerous driving before it results in injury or loss of life.

Key Provisions of House Bill 0744

1. Enhanced Penalties and Points System

HB 0744 **increases penalties and point assessments** to deter reckless driving and hold violators accountable:

- **Negligent driving** will now result in **2 points** on a driver's record.
- **Speeding 30 mph or more over the posted limit** will result in **6 points**.
- **Reckless driving penalties increased to:**
 - **Up to 60 days in jail** and/or a **\$1,000 fine**.
- **Negligent driving fines** will increase to **\$750**.
- **Aggressive driving fines** will increase to **\$1,000**.

These increases reflect the serious nature of reckless and aggressive driving behaviors, ensuring that offenders face appropriate consequences for endangering public safety.

2. Expanded Definitions of Reckless and Aggressive Driving

HB 0744 broadens the legal definitions of reckless and aggressive driving to cover more dangerous behaviors:

- **Reckless driving** now explicitly includes:
 - **Excessive speeding (30+ mph over the limit)** as an indicator of reckless intent.
- **Aggressive driving charges** will now apply when a driver commits **two or more (previously three) dangerous violations**, making it easier to **identify and penalize dangerous drivers** before they cause harm.
- The list of **violations qualifying as aggressive driving** has been expanded to include:
 - **Failure to stop for a pedestrian in a crosswalk.**
 - **Passing a stopped school bus with flashing red lights.**
 - **Unsafe lane changes and weaving between lanes.**

- **Tailgating and failing to yield the right-of-way.**
- **Skidding, spinning wheels, or excessive noise.**
- **Discharging diesel emissions onto another vehicle (“rolling coal”).**
- **Motorcycles passing in the same lane or riding between lanes of traffic.**

By lowering the threshold for aggressive driving charges and expanding the list of offenses, this bill ensures that Maryland’s traffic laws reflect the modern dangers of reckless driving.

Why This Bill Matters

Maryland’s current penalties are not enough to deter dangerous driving behaviors, and law enforcement challenges leave reckless drivers unaccountable. HB 0744 strengthens Maryland’s commitment to road safety by providing clearer definitions, increased penalties, and a stronger framework for enforcement.

The impact of HB 0744 will be significant, resulting in:

- **Fewer accidents and fatalities** caused by reckless and aggressive driving.
- **Increased accountability** for dangerous drivers.
- **Safer roads for all Marylanders**, including **pedestrians, cyclists, and responsible motorists**—our **families, friends, and neighbors**.

Furthermore, HB 0744 is a necessary response to real-world tragedies. MCP Sgt. Patrick Kepp’s injuries in 2023 serve as a stark reminder of the devastating consequences of reckless driving. This bill made into law will deter people who would otherwise engage in reckless behavior on public roads.

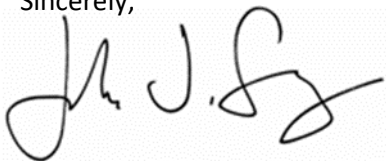
A Call to Action – Please Support HB 0744 for Safer Roads

The **Maryland Coalition for Roadway Safety** urges you to support HB 0744 and take decisive action to make Maryland’s roads safer for everyone. Reckless driving is not just a traffic violation—it is a life-threatening danger that affects thousands of families every year. By passing HB 0744, Maryland will send a clear message: reckless, negligent, and aggressive driving will not be tolerated.

We appreciate your time and commitment to making Maryland a safer place for all who travel or attempt to cross our roads.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Sincerely,



John J. Seng
Chair
Maryland Coalition for Roadway Safety, Inc.

cc: SafeRoadsMD Board, S. Morningstar - Montgomery County Office of Intergovernmental Relations

MGA 2025 Testimony Bill HB0744 (Reckless, Negligen

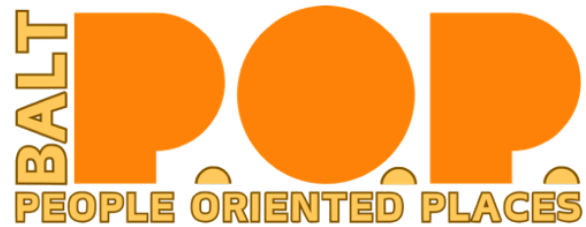
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Position: FAV

Bill: HB0744

Bill Title: Motor Vehicles - Reckless, Negligent,
and Aggressive Driving

Position: **Favorable**



Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee,

As a group which advocates for a built environment which is safe and convenient for all people, whether they are moving through that environment on foot, on a bicycle, in a wheelchair, via public transit, or in an automobile, we support HB0744.

Maryland's roadways are not safe, especially for vulnerable road users (VRUs). Despite the Vision Zero efforts of the past several years, those roadways have actually gotten less safe - for everyone. That said, aggressive driving isn't a major factor behind that decrease in safety. According to the Maryland Highway Safety Office (MHSO), during the most recent five-year reporting period, aggressive driving only accounted for an annual average of four percent of all injury crashes and seven percent of all fatal crashes in Maryland. [1]

The MHSO also states that, in 2022, only 532 citations were issued statewide for aggressive driving. They elaborate:

Difficulties exist in obtaining convictions for violating the aggressive driving statute because of the requirement that officers observe three separate driving violations to issue an aggressive driving citation. Law enforcement officers will not typically wait to observe three or more offenses before taking enforcement action. [1]

With this bill reducing the threshold for aggressive driving from the concurrent violation of **three** or more of the current law's **relatively short list** of offenses to the concurrent violation of **two** or more of this bill's **expanded list** of offenses, the above-listed percentages and numbers are bound to increase.

Given that this bill explicitly includes several offenses against VRUs in the list of offenses that qualify for aggressive driving, we find ourselves supporting this bill. The current bar for what constitutes aggressive driving would appear to be too low. At its heart, aggressive driving is the manifestation of a driver's conscious willingness to put the other road users around them at risk. The revised standards set by this bill reflect that.

To be clear, we agree with Strong Towns that we need to move beyond our fixation on assigning blame for automobile crashes on drivers. [2] Our current go-to tools of driver education campaigns, shaming incorrect behaviors, levying fines, and (with this bill) threatening imprisonment aren't going to get us to where we really want to be (Vision Zero).

We need to, instead, focus on a) better roadway designs that compel slower speeds and safer driving and b) truly **deprioritize** high vehicle speeds and automobile flow over the safety of VRUs. But, institutionalizing the crash analysis practices that Strong Towns has proven out will take time, as will the subsequent culture changes. Until then, we have to work within the parameters of the system we have today. In that light, we are in favor of this bill.

Whenever we find ourselves behind the wheel, we need to be fully aware of the harm we can inflict. Making imprisonment a possibility when driving aggressively (and expanding the list of- and lowering the bar for- what qualifies as aggressive driving) should help us all keep that awareness more top of mind.

We hope the committee finds these points helpful and convincing and we urge its members to **vote in favor of HB0744**. Thank you for your efforts and the opportunity for us to testify on this legislation.

[BaltPOP - Baltimoreans for People-Oriented Places](#)

References:

[1] Maryland Highway Safety Office. "2023 Annual Report". July 2024.

https://zerodeathsmd.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/MDOT_Annual_Report_2023_508.pdf

[2] Charles Marohn. "It's Time To Learn From Crashes and Create Safer Streets Today".

October 30, 2024

<https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2024/10/30/its-time-to-learn-from-crashes-and-create-safer-streets-today>

HB0744 Written Testimony 2.pdf

Uploaded by: Mindy Badin

Position: FAV

Please support HB0744

February 11, 2025

To:

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

From:

Mindy Badin, Transportation Committee Chair
Greater Olney Civic Association

Dear Chair Korman and Vice Chair Boyce:

I strongly support the passage of HB0744 “Motor Vehicles - Reckless, Negligent, and Aggressive Driving,” and respectfully request that the House Environment and Transportation Committee members vote to submit a favorable response to enact this bill to curb the epidemic of roadway violence in Maryland.

Having lost my own son Brett as he was crossing the street to meet some friends for dinner, I have been advocating for safer streets for the past five years. I believe my experiences give me a personal perspective on roadway safety. It is understandable that I had a visceral response when I learned of the events of October 18, 2023, the day of Sgt. Patrick Kepp’s crash.

I was worried and concerned about the well-being of Sgt. Kepp, the dedicated police officer who lost his legs that night. The information revealed in the ensuing hours and days was alarming, and the concern I felt quickly melted into anger. The accused was well-known amongst the police. He had a history of excessive speeding, aggressive driving, and baiting police officers into pursuits. Yet, he was still on the roads that evening, endangering the lives of everyone who was in his vicinity.

I could not understand how someone with so many citations, who was known to police, could continue to drive so recklessly. In speaking to several police officers, the accused's case is not unique. Many drivers greatly exceeding the speed limit and driving aggressively are repeat offenders.

It should not have taken the severe, life-changing injuries of a dedicated police officer to pass stricter, stronger penalties for those who drive irresponsibly and have a wanton disregard for life.

Approving HB0744 will help insure public safety by making aggressive drivers more accountable for their actions. I thank you and the Environment and Transportation Committee members, and I urge you to submit a favorable recommendation and support HB0744.

Sincerely,

Mindy Badin

HB0744 - MVA - LOS - Motor Vehicles - Reckless, Ne

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: FAV

February 13, 2025

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
251 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Letter of Support – House Bill 744 – Motor Vehicles - Reckless, Negligent, and Aggressive Driving

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports House Bill 744 as a needed safety reform to discourage and protect against dangerous driving behaviors.

HB 744 would reduce the number of certain observed moving violations witnessed by a law enforcement officer from three to two for citing the driver for aggressive driving and adds moving violations that may be assessed. It also adds driving 30 miles per hour or more over the posted speed limit to offenses considered reckless driving along with assessing six points for the offense. The legislation further assesses two points for negligent driving alters penalties for reckless and negligent driving.

In 2023, law enforcement officers wrote 10,375 citations for reckless driving and 534 citations for aggressive driving. Traffic stops occur before officers observe the three dangerous driving actions required to meet the threshold for aggressive driving, limiting its application. Additionally, 11,000 moving violations were issued in 2023 for drivers operating a vehicle at least 30 miles per hour over the speed limit. These actions present some of the greatest dangers to road users in Maryland - reckless or negligent driving, along with excessive speed, are guarantees of a higher risk of crashes and serious injuries or death.

Each year in Maryland, 170 people are killed or seriously injured in a crash caused by speeding. As Maryland works toward its goal of zero deaths on its roadways by 2030, measures that deter the behaviors most responsible for deaths and serious injuries on the roadways are needed tools to reach that goal.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests that the Committee grant House Bill 744 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine E. Nizer
Administrator
Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration
410-787-7830

Matthew Mickler
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090

AAA's Testimony in Support of House Bill 744 - Mot

Uploaded by: Ragina Ali

Position: FAV



**AAA Mid-Atlantic's Testimony in Support of HB 744 - Motor Vehicles –
Reckless, Negligent, and Aggressive Driving**

Sponsor: Delegate Wims et al

- AAA Mid-Atlantic **supports House Bill 744 - Motor Vehicles – Reckless, Negligent, and Aggressive Driving.**
- This bill is intended to address the reckless disregard for public safety and the mayhem we are seeing more and more frequently on Maryland roads.
- These incidents have tragically, resulted in death and serious injuries in our state.
- The tragic incident in Montgomery County, in the fall of 2023, when Sergeant Patrick Kepp was critically injured is one such example.
- An estimated 29,135 people died in traffic crashes during the first nine months of last year, according to the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#).
- Despite that representing a decrease of about 4.4% as compared to the first nine months of 2023, risky and dangerous driving behaviors persist nationwide and here, in Maryland.
- In 2023, there were 577 fatal crashes in Maryland, according to the [MDOT MVA Highway Safety Office](#), resulting in 621 deaths. Speed was a factor in 102 of those fatalities and an aggressive driver was involved in 62 of those deaths. (Source: [MDOT MVA Highway Safety Office, data as of February 11, 2025](#))
- The bottom line is—speed kills—and the blatant disregard for public safety that can be witnessed on our roadways on any given day is deadly and must be stopped.
- HB 744 increases penalties for reckless and negligent driving, and explicitly defines reckless driving as driving at a speed at least 30 miles per hour above the posted speed limit.
- The bill also increases penalties for aggressive driving and expands the list of driving offenses that constitute aggressive driving, to include dangerous acts such as: overtaking a stopped school vehicle with flashing red lights; the splitting of lanes by motorcycles; passing or overtaking a vehicle stopped for a pedestrian in a crosswalk, among many other egregious violations.
- Equally important, it reduces the number of dangerous offenses committed “at the same time or during a single and continuous period of driving,” required to constitute aggressive driving from three to two offenses.
- Over the years, we have seen countless cases where drivers involved in fatal or serious crashes in Maryland received a mere slap on the wrist, as their victims and lives of the families of victims are forever changed.
- Those who wish to disregard the rules of the road in a dangerous and deadly manner need to be held accountable, and HB 744 strives to do that. We respectfully urge the Committee to render **a favorable report for HB 744.**

Contacts:

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Public and Government Affairs
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*Sherrie Sims, G.S. Proctor & Assoc.
Senior State Associate
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HB 744 - MoCo_Morningstar_FAV (GA 25).pdf

Uploaded by: Sara Morningstar

Position: FAV



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550

ANNAPOLIS: 240-777-8270

HB 744

DATE: February 13, 2025

SPONSOR: Delegate Wims, et al.

ASSIGNED TO: Environment and Transportation

CONTACT PERSON: Sara Morningstar (Sara.Morningstar@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: SUPPORT

Motor Vehicles – Reckless, Negligent, and Aggressive Driving

House Bill 744 would increase the penalties and points assessed for reckless, negligent, and aggressive driving offenses. The bill defines reckless driving as traveling at a speed of at least 30 miles per hour above the posted speed limit. Additionally, the bill would reduce from three to two the number of aggressive driving offenses committed at the same time or during a single and continuous period of driving by a motorist (including motorcycles) and increase the number of specific actions considered as aggressive driving offenses. Montgomery County supports House Bill 744.

In 2023, Montgomery County Police Sgt. Patrick Kepp was seriously injured after being struck on I-270 by a reckless and aggressive driver who had repeatedly engaged in dangerous driving, including incidents where he operated his car at speeds well over 130 miles per hour. The Montgomery County Police Department was familiar with the teenage driver. He had been issued multiple citations, but he continued to engage in aggressive driving. In the early morning hours of October 18, 2023, after receiving another report of dangerous driving by the notorious teen, Sgt. Kepp responded to the incident by driving to the section of I-270 where the car had been headed and deployed stop sticks in the road to deflate the driver's tires. Instead of the driver slowing down to prevent a crash, he drove into Sgt. Kepp causing the police officer to sustain crushing injuries to his legs resulting in necessary amputation. The driver has been charged with attempted first-degree murder, first-degree assault, and causing life-threatening injuries to Sgt. Kepp.

This should not have happened. Stronger State laws need to be in place to keep dangerous drivers off the roads. And for individuals who willfully violate State traffic laws – and intentionally endanger public safety – consequential penalties should be available in the prosecutions of those drivers. Montgomery County urges the Committee to adopt a favorable report on House Bill 744.

HB0744_ Motor Vehicles - Reckless, Negligent, and

Uploaded by: Steve Ashurst

Position: FAV

February 11, 2025

HB0744: Motor Vehicles - Reckless, Negligent, and Aggressive Driving

To Chair Korman and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

I support HB0744, which alters the penalties for aggressive driving, bringing them in-line with the actions severity and adding needed elements to help curb aggressive driving.

I walk, bike, and take public transportation when possible, as it is mostly a pleasant and relaxing experience. Outside of a vehicle, aggressive driving behaviors are an assault on the people walking and bicycling. These behaviors must be curtailed for all road users and especially the most vulnerable road users.

Having been side-swiped by an aggressive driver, I know all too well that my life is in very real danger while riding a bicycle on the shoulder. Seeing vehicles mangled on the side of the road, I know those crashes didn't happen without somebody making a decision to engage in reckless and aggressive driving behavior.

Anything we can do to potentially decrease this behavior will help save lives for people navigating our roads in a motor vehicle, bicycle, scooter, wheel chair, or on foot.

I urge you to pass this bill out of committee so that it can be brought to the House floor for a vote. This bill has the potential to improve the lives of countless Marylanders who use active transportation as well as reducing aggressive driving behaviors.

Sincerely,

Steve Ashurst
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Burtonsville, MD 20866
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330-474-3147