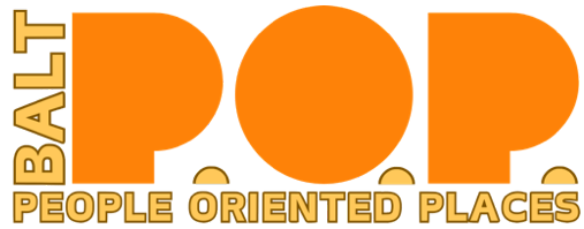


Bill: SB0627

Bill Title: Vehicle Laws - Bicycles - Operation at Intersections

Position: **Favorable**



Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee,

As a group that advocates for transportation options which contribute to the liveability, productivity, and overall appeal of our communities comprising the Baltimore region, we support SB0627.

A large number of our group's members consider bicycling a significant or primary mode of transportation. As such, we completely understand the situation which this bill will formally legalize. But, we can understand if many/most members of the committee haven't personally experienced it.

When a person riding their bicycle on a roadway approaches a stop sign at an intersection at a point in time where there is no cross-traffic, their safest way to proceed is to slow down - but not actually stop - at the intersection. By slowing (but not stopping), the cyclist's momentum allows them to move through and clear the intersection much more quickly than if they were to attempt to pass through it from a complete stop.

The longer any vulnerable road user (whether it be someone walking, rolling, or cycling) finds themselves in a roadway (especially crossing through an intersection), the greater the chance they'll be struck by an automobile. Reducing the opportunity for such a strike benefits all parties, including drivers.

If you have never found yourself in the situation which this bill will formally legalize (as a cyclist), it can be difficult to understand how exposed and vulnerable it can feel to cross through an intersection (on a bicycle). It's daunting, especially if you are not a strong cyclist, especially if you are traveling uphill, especially if you are traveling into the wind, especially if you are biking with a load (e.g., groceries).

This bill is not a gambit to allow people riding bicycles to flaunt the law. It is simply a measure that allows cyclists to get out of harm's way as quickly as is safely possible. While a person driving a car can rather effortlessly accelerate from a standing position and get up to speed very quickly, a person riding a bicycle needs to put in a significant effort and be allowed a comparatively long amount of time to do the same.

There is decades of precedent for this bill:

In 1982, Idaho was the first State to pass such a law, commonly known as the "Idaho Stop Law." The law allows bicyclists to yield at stop signs and proceed when safe, rather than come to a complete stop. After Idaho adopted the law, bicyclist injuries from traffic crashes declined by 14.5% the following year (Meggs, 2010). In 2017, Delaware adopted a similar, limited stop-as-yield law, known as the "Delaware Yield." Traffic crashes involving bicyclists at stop sign intersections fell by 23% in the 30 months after the law's passage, compared to the previous 30 months. Eight States (Arkansas, Delaware, Idaho, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Utah, and Washington) have similar laws. [1]

This bill will serve as one more additional step in remaking our transportation system to be one that allows for and encourages options/modes beyond those which require access to and/or ownership of an automobile. It is a zero-cost policy change which will have a positive impact.

We hope the committee finds these points helpful and convincing and we urge its members to **vote in favor of SB0627**. Thank you for your efforts and the opportunity for us to testify on this legislation.

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

References:

[1] "Bicyclist "Stop-As-Yield" Laws and Safety Fact Sheet". NHTSA. March 2023.

https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.gov/files/2023-03/Bicyclist-Yield-As-Stop-Fact-Sheet_032123_v5_tag.pdf