

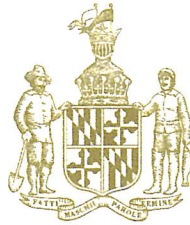
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Budget and Taxation Committee

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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Senate Bill 710 – Criminal Law – Motor Vehicle or Vessel – Criminal Negligence

February 19, 2025

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

Preliminary motor vehicle data by Maryland State Police indicate the following 2024 statistics:

528 fatalities

29,203 accidents resulting in personal injuries

Drivers, pedestrians, cyclists and workers are all being put in harm's way by the actions of drivers who operate their motor vehicles with blatant disregard for public safety.

We need to address the behaviors that are resulting in deaths and injuries before these accidents occur. Under current law, there are penalties for causing a life-threatening injury to another as a result of the person's driving, operating, or controlling a motor vehicle or vessel in a criminally negligent manner. Senate Bill 710 will expand on that law by adding that a person may not drive, operate or control a motor vehicle or vessel in a criminally negligent manner, and adds penalties even if the criminally negligent conduct has not resulted in a life-threatening injury to another.

By adding this language to the law, people who act in a criminally negligent manner with their vehicles or vessels, will have to appear in court to address the behavior in a substantive way. If convicted of a violation of this section of the law, a person would be guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to imprisonment not exceeding 6 months or a fine not exceeding \$5000 or both.

People who disregard the rules of the road and operate their motor vehicles in a dangerous and deadly way need to be held accountable and when the conduct is so significantly harmful in and of itself, we should not have to wait until someone is seriously injured or killed to address the conduct.

And so, I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 710.