



ABATE OF MARYLAND, INC.

Dedicated to Freedom of the Road & Responsible Motorcycle Legislation

To: The Honorable Will Smith, Chairman Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Ken Eaton, Executive Director, ABATE of Maryland, Inc.

Date: January 20, 2025

Re: SB044 - Reckless and Negligent Driving - Penalties (Sherry's and Christian's Law)

Position: **FAVORABLE - SUPPORT**

As a motorcyclist, and the Executive Director of ABATE of Maryland, Inc., I am urging you to **support** SB 0044 – Sherry’s and Christopher’s Law. I have been a motorcyclist, travelling through 30+ states in the past 30+ years.

From time to time, I visit Pam Schultz, the widow of one of our former Executive Directors of ABATE of Maryland, Inc. She asks that I relay Marty’s story and the ABATE message to the committee. It has been nearly 19 years, but it is still tough for her to talk about it, and she didn’t feel like she could put the right words together. I have been trusted with the honor of relaying this story on her behalf.

Marty Schultz, her husband, was killed in a traffic accident on August 30, 2006. Marty was driving one of his motorcycles in Talbot County Maryland on Maryland Rt. 309. He was struck by another vehicle that ran a stop sign, striking him, and knocking him off his motorcycle. Marty was pronounced dead at the scene. When I received the call, I went to the scene. To this day, that is still one of the most surreal feelings I have ever experienced. Life was cut short in an instant. No goodbye, no see you later, no anything. My friend was gone. Several of us immediately went over to be with Pam and the kids.

Marty was a husband, father, son, biker, business owner, and friend. Many of us spent a lot of time with Marty and his family. Motorcycles and ABATE are a large part of all of our lives. Marty was responsible for getting me to join ABATE, in the late 1980’s. We all worked on events, rode many miles, and enjoyed many times together. Bikers are one big family. Our kids and grandkids grew up together, our families know each other, and we all help each other. When news of Marty’s accident came around, bikers came from all over to help Pam and the family get through some tough times.

One of the toughest things for a family to go through is feeling like there is no accountability for someone that causes an accident. The accident that Marty died from, ended up with the other driver getting a failure to obey a traffic control device, allows the driver to pre-pay the fine, and never appears in court. Was it an accident? We may never know. Although a court appearance will never bring back a loved one, it provides the opportunity for friends and family to hear what happened. For some that may not sound like much, but for others, it may bring that one last piece of the puzzle to light. It also creates a sense of **accountability**. The driver that caused the accident should at least be required to go to court and be held accountable for their actions. Again, that may not sound like much, but many times in life, it is the little things that actually matter.

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I rode a lot of miles with Marty and Pam. We rode motorcycles in Maryland for many years before helmets were mandatory. We worked side-by-side for benefits for other riders and their families that were killed in traffic accidents. We held various positions in the ABATE organization throughout the years. One thing rang true for all of us, our love for motorcycles. However, another part of that love is the drive and desire to make sure that motorcycling can be enjoyed by all of us for years to come. ABATE members have joined together to advocate training as the foremost means of reducing accidents and injury, to put an end to discriminatory legislation, to communicate clearly, to explore ways to improve the overall motorcycling experience in Maryland, and to provide for and assure a continuing freedom and affordability of motorcycling. We do this because if we don't, who will?

Just as a reflection, ABATE worked for years on a "Right-of-Way Violation Penalties" bill from 2004 through 2008. Two years AFTER Marty's death, we successfully passed SB712/HB1231 (2008) that indicated "*Establishing that if a person fails to yield the right-of-way in violation of specified provisions of law and the violation contributes to an accident that results in the death or serious bodily injury of another, the person is subject to a specified fine and the Motor Vehicle Administration is authorized to suspend the person's license for a specified period of time; etc.*" So, ABATE continued working on legislation that affects motorcyclists. However, after a few years of speaking with attorneys that were left with few options regarding right-of-way violation cases, we decided to renew our efforts.

Here is a brief summary of the history on this Right of Way Violation / Death or Serious Bodily Injury – Penalties – Must Appear type of legislation:

2015: SB 790 was sponsored by Senator Anthony Muse

2016: HB1414 was cosponsored by Delegate Ariana Kelly

2017: HB 329 was cosponsored by Delegates Fraser-Hidalgo & Ben Kramer

2018: HB1099 was sponsored by Delegate Lafferty passed E&T and the entire House floor unanimously

2018: SB868 was sponsored by Senator Lee

2019: SB804 was cosponsored by Senators Lee and Smith passed Senate JPR & entire senate unanimously

2019: HB112: was cosponsored by 23 delegates, passed E&T and the entire House floor unanimously

2020: HB 1168: was cosponsored by Delegates Nick Charles and Ariana Kelly

2021: HB 668: was sponsored by Delegate Kathy Szeliga

2021: SB 495: was sponsored by Senator Robert Cassilly

2022: HB 7: was sponsored by Delegate Kathy Szeliga

2022: SB25 was sponsored by Senator Robert Cassilly, and passed JPR Committee and the entire Senate unanimously

2023: HB 360: was cosponsored by 27 delegates. No vote in Judiciary

2023: SB252: was cosponsored by Senators Mary Beth Carozza, William Folden, Mary-Dulaney James and Chris West, and passed JPR Committee and the entire Senate unanimously

2024: SB68: Sponsored by Senators Mary Beth Carozza, Dawn Gile, JB Jennings, Katherine Klausmeier, Ron Watson, and Chris West. No vote in JPR committee.

2024: HB1335: Sponsored by Delegate Kathy Szeliga. No vote in Judiciary

So, as tribute to my friend, his family, and the many others that have been killed in motorcycle accidents, I continue the work. ABATE is dedicated to freedom of the road and responsible motorcycle legislation.

The SB044 bill indicates *“providing that a person charged with reckless or negligent driving that contributes to an accident that results in the death of another person must appear in court and may not prepay the fine; authorizing a court to waive the requirement to appear under certain circumstances; and generally relating to reckless and negligent driving.”*

I have added a list of many of the current “Must Appear” offenses. I think it is past time to add reckless or negligent driving that contributes to an accident that results in the death of another person to this list.

On behalf of Pam Schultz, the Sherry Zdon family, the Travis “Christian” Butcher family, all motorcyclists, and all motorists in Maryland, I am hereby urging **support for SB044** - Reckless and Negligent Driving and **urge the committee to vote FAVORABLY.**

Sincerely,

ABATE of Maryland, Inc.



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		Fine/Cont/ to Accident			Fine/Cont/ to Accident		
01)	21-801.1	Exceed Max Speed.....MPH in.....Zone.....		23)	21-301(a)	Failure to Drive Right of Center.....	\$90.00 / \$130.00
02)	13-401(b)(1)	Operating Unregistered Motor Veh.....	\$290.00	24)	21-304(c)	Driving off Road While Passing Vehicle.....	\$110.00 / \$150.00
03)	13-401(h)	Driving With Suspended Registration	\$150.00	25)	21-308(a)	Driving Wrong Direction on One Way Road.....	\$90.00 / \$130.00
04)	13-409(b)	Fail to Display Reg. Card on Demand.....	\$ 50.00	26)	21-309(b)	Unsafe Lane Changing.....	\$90.00 / \$130.00
05)	13-411(a)	Fail to Attach Plates at Front & Rear.....	\$ 70.00	27)	21-310(a)	Following Veh. Too Closely.....	\$110.00 / \$150.00
06)	13-411(d)	Driving w/o Current Tags.....	\$ 70.00	28)	21-402(a)	Fail to Yield to Oncoming Traffic on Left Turn....	\$110.00 / \$150.00
07)	13-411(f)	Display Expired Reg. Plates	\$ 70.00	29)	21-707(a)	Fail to Stop at Stop Sign.....	\$90.00 / \$130.00
08)	13-411(g)	Display Reg. Plates Issued to Another	\$ 70.00	30)	21-801(a)	Speed Greater Than Reasonable	\$90.00 / \$130.00
09)	13-703(g)	Unauthorized Disp. & Use of Reg. Plate....	\$290.00	31)	21-801(b)	Failure to Control Speed to Avoid Collision.....	\$130.00
10)	16-101(a)(1)	Driving Without License.....	MA	32)	21-901.1(a)	Reckless Driving.....	\$510.00
11)	16-112(c)	Fail to Display License on Demand.....	\$ 50.00	33)	21-901.1(b)	Negligent Driving.....	\$240.00 / \$280.00
12)	16-113(h)	Violating Restricted Lic. Restriction.....	\$ 70.00	34)	21-902(a)(1)(i)	Driving Veh. While Under Influence of Alcohol ..	MA
13)	16-115(g)	Driving With an Expired License	\$ 70.00	35)	21-902(a)(1)(i)(i)	Driving Under Influence of Alcohol Per Se	MA
14)	16-116(a)	Failure Notify Adm. Address Change	\$ 50.00	36)	21-902(b)(1)(i)	Driving While Impaired by Alcohol.....	MA
15)	16-303(c)	Driving on Suspended Lic. & Priv.....	MA	37)	21-902(c)(1)(i)	Driving While So Far Impaired by Drug(s) or Drug(s) and Alcohol Cannot Drive Safely.....	MA
16)	16-303(d)	Driving on Revoked Lic. & Priv.....	MA	38)	21-902(d)(1)(i)	Driving While Impaired by Controlled Dangerous Substance.....	MA
17)	16-303(f)	Driving on Suspended Out of State Lic.....	MA	39)	21-1117(c)	Driver Spinning Wheels.....	\$70.00 / \$110.00
18)	16-303(h)	Driving While Lic. Suspended Under (16-203, 16-206 a2 Fail to Attend DIP, 17-106, 26-204, 26-206, 27-103).....	MA	40)	22-412.2(d)(1)	Failing to Secure Child Under Age 8 in Child Safety Seat When Transporting in Motor Vehicle.	\$83.00
19)	17-107(a)(1)	Driving Uninsured Vehicle.....	MA	41)	22-412.3(b)	(Operator, Occupant Under 16) Not Restrained by (Seat Belt, Child Safety Seat).....	\$83.00
20)	21-201(a)(1)	Failure to Obey Traffic Device.....	\$90.00 / \$130.00	42)	22-412.3(c)(2)	Front Passenger 16 or More w/o Seat Belt.....	\$83.00
21)	21-202(h)(1)	Failure to Stop at Steady Circular Red Signal.....	\$140.00 / \$180.00				
22)	21-202(i)(1)	Fail to stop at Red Signal Before Right Turn.	\$90.00 / \$130.00				

List of most traffic violations that require a “**Must Appear.**”

- **Drivers' licenses:**
 - Driving without a license
 - Driving on alcohol restriction
 - Fraudulent / fictitious license
 - Suspended, revoked, or refused license.
 - Improper license
- **Accidents and Accident Reporting**
 - Failure to stop.
 - Failure to remain on scene.
 - Failure to render reasonable assistance.
 - Failure to report accident.
 - False report
- **Traffic Signals**
 - Willfully altering
- **Pedestrians**
 - Failure to stop for a pedestrian in a crosswalk.
 - Passing a vehicle stopped for pedestrian in a crosswalk.
- **Reckless. Negligent, etc.**
 - Causing death or physical injury to a *VULNERABLE INDIVIDUAL*
 - DUI
 - DWI
 - Driving without a required ignition interlock
 - Fleeing & eluding a police officer
 - Bodily injury / death or another - if fleeing and eluding a police officer
- **Miscellaneous**
 - participating in a race. speed contest and in an accident that causes serious injury / death of another.
 - Use of a handheld telephone/text messaging device while driving, causing an accident that directly results in death , serious bodily injury
 - Pumping gas into a dirt bike from a retail pump in Baltimore City
 - Exhibition driving in a special event zone in Worcester County MD