



# Morningside Police Department

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**Daniel J. Franklin**  
**Chief of Police**

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TO: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
The Honorable Senator William C. Smith, Jr. – Chair

FROM: Chief Daniel J. Franklin #0255  
Morningside Police Department

RE: Written Testimony Supporting SB 0613  
Montgomery County and Prince George's County - Distracted Driving Monitoring System Pilot Program

DATE: February 11, 2025

Greetings Chairman Smith and the members of the Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee.

My name is Daniel Franklin, and I am the Chief of Police for the Morningside Police Department in Prince George's County, Maryland. After careful review of SB 0613 sponsored by Senators Jackson and Waldstreicher, I am submitting this written testimony **SUPPORTING** the passage of the bill.

Distracted driving is any activity that diverts attention from driving, including talking or texting on your phone, eating and drinking, talking to people in your vehicle, fiddling with the stereo, entertainment or navigation system — anything that takes your attention away from the task of safe driving as per the National Highway Traffic Safety Association.

In 2022, NHTSA reported that 3,308 people were killed due to distracted driving in the United States. Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration (MDOT MVA) reports that approximately 27,000 people are killed or injured in distracted driving accidents every year. In response to this issue, the Maryland General Assembly passed Senate Bill 321 and House Bill 924 making use of handheld cellular phones while driving an illegal act. Texting is the most alarming distraction. Sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for 5 seconds. At 55 mph, that's like driving the length of an entire football field with your eyes closed!

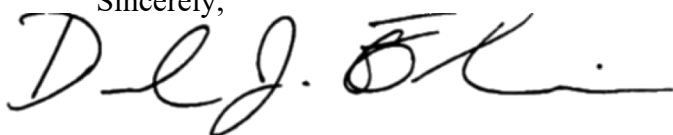
The use of technology to combat traffic offenses is an ever-evolving solution employed by thousands of governmental units and law enforcement agencies across the United States. Automated enforcement has become even more important due to what some Police administrators and managers are calling a manpower crisis

because of declining interest in the law enforcement field. Automated enforcement cannot replace a Police Officer, but that technology can supplement the efforts of the Police by helping reduce distracted driving by conducting enforcement actions. The bottom line in conducting any distracted driving enforcement is to promote greater roadway safety for all drivers, passengers, and pedestrians. By seeking legislation to allow automated distracted driving enforcement, the counties of Prince George's and Montgomery will show their commitment to the overall highway safety mission. By passing this bill, the Maryland General Assembly will show that they too are committed to that same mission and are prepared to take the necessary steps to prevent injuries and deaths due to distracted driving.

For these reasons, I ask that the committee give a favorable report on SB 0613 and accept my written testimony **SUPPORTING** SB 0613.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'D.J. Franklin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chief Daniel J. Franklin #0255  
Morningside Police Department