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TESTIMONY ON SB#/0158- POSITION: FAVORABLE

Counties - Construction of Sidewalks and Crosswalks - Safe Alternative Routes to Public Schools

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#/0158, Counties - Construction of Sidewalks and Crosswalks - Safe Alternative Routes to Public Schools

The recent massive snowstorm has shown the need for this legislation to protect students who walk to school but may end up walking in streets due to uncleared sidewalks. Even in good weather, not every student has a safe path to their school. This bill will ensure we protect those students by ensuring that pathway exists for their use.

Student pedestrian injuries in Maryland school zones are a significant concern, often caused by speeding, distracted driving, and poor visibility. These accidents can lead to serious injuries such as broken bones or head injuries, with liability potentially falling on reckless drivers, school staff, or bus operators.¹

Key Considerations for Maryland Student Pedestrian Accidents:

- **Common Causes**
- **Legal Liability**
- **Safety Incidents**
- **Safety Measures**

We can accomplish this goal for all Maryland students by requiring a county board of education each year to prepare and post to the county's website a report that identifies pathways that public school students who are ineligible for transportation services may use to travel to school using only safe alternative routes under certain circumstances; requiring the governing body of a county each year to review a certain report and construct any sidewalks and crosswalks necessary to create safe alternative routes for public school students under certain circumstances; etc.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#/0158.

¹ Google AI Search "student injury walking to school in Maryland"