

Testimony on SB0158 – FAVORABLE

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

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee – February 18, 2026

EEE Committee and Members of the Maryland General Assembly,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit **FAVORABLE testimony in support of SB0158 and cross-filed House legislation, HB0394.**

After two students were tragically struck and killed walking to school in November 2023, I was the longtime PTO president and Safe Routes advocate in Prince George’s County who organized other parent leaders and created a coalition of 11 school parent groups representing more than 8,200 students to raise awareness of this issue and work on long-term solutions. That advocacy helped lead to the Prince George’s County School Pedestrian Safety Workgroup, which met regularly for six months to create a report with 18 detailed recommendations to improve safety around our schools.

SB0158 and HB0394 align with several of our recommendations, including:

- Initiating an overall evaluation of accessibility around schools
- Establishing a unified “walk audit” template
- Creating a pedestrian safety risk measure of schools

Additionally, Prince George’s County Public Schools has hired two Safe Passage coordinators who are vital in this work and have performed more than 100 safety assessments around the county so far. This work helps identify existing safe pathways, needed improvements, and can help assist school, county and municipal officials in project prioritization.

No single solution will prevent every tragedy, and it will require a comprehensive strategy to create safer pathways to and from school. But far too many school communities lack even basic pedestrian safety and this legislation is an important step in addressing this issue. My only additional comment is that construction of new sidewalks and crosswalks will require collaboration between LEAs, county, municipal, and occasionally state officials depending on where a school is located. But we cannot allow jurisdictional coordination to get in the way of student safety.

Every child has the right to get to and from school safely – and I thank Senator Ellis, Delegate Terrasa, and all co-sponsors for introducing this important legislation. I respectfully urge a FAVORABLE report on SB0158 and HB0394.

Timothy Meyer

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