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STATE'S ATTORNEY

DATE: February 24, 2026

BILL NUMBER: HB 591

POSITION: Favorable

Since January 2022, the Salisbury Police Department has responded to hundreds of calls for service involving individuals standing in or immediately adjacent to active travel lanes at high-traffic intersections, shopping center entrances and exits, tunnels, and underpasses. In many cases, these individuals step directly into moving traffic to solicit and accept money or other items from motorists. This conduct creates an immediate and preventable risk of serious injury or death—not only to the individuals in the roadway, but to drivers, passengers, and bystanders.

Officers have also encountered situations in which pedestrians acted aggressively toward motorists and responding officers, and where individuals appeared to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, further compounding the danger. These are not isolated incidents; they represent a recurring public safety issue in our community.

While Maryland law contains general pedestrian and traffic safety provisions, existing statutes do not adequately address this specific and escalating conduct. HB 591 provides a targeted, commonsense tool to allow law enforcement in Wicomico County to intervene before tragedy occurs.

Passage of this legislation would enable officers to deter hazardous roadway behavior, make appropriate contact with individuals who may be in crisis, connect them with available services, and engage mental health co-responder teams when appropriate. Most importantly, it will enhance roadway safety for everyone who travels through our community.

For these reasons, this Office supports HB 591 and respectfully urges its passage.