



NATIONAL FEDERATION  
OF THE BLIND

MARYLAND

*Live the life you want.*

From: Ronza Othman, President  
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To: House Environment and Transportation Committee

The members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland urge the House Environment and Transportation Committee to give a favorable report to HB0256.

Our organization's membership consists of blind Marylanders, many of whom are intrepid travelers, and many of whom wish to learn to travel. Unlike sighted pedestrians, blind pedestrians are unable to use vision, and thus often travel with long white canes, guide dogs, or other alternative techniques. Sighted pedestrians can learn pedestrian safety by observing, but blind travelers must receive specialized instruction called Orientation and Mobility (O&M). Because this type of instruction is highly specialized, blind travelers must start learning cane skills when we are young if possible, or as early as possible into our blindness journeys, and the instruction continues until we feel confident in our abilities. However, due to the specialized nature of O&M instruction, we may only receive as little as an hour of instruction per week, sometimes less.

Blind and low vision individuals would particularly benefit from this bill because, as pedestrians, we are at the mercy of drivers who frequently don't adhere to posted speed limits. This results in decreased safety as we move about our communities. We depend on sound to cross streets, follow traffic in areas where we must walk on the shoulder due to lack of sidewalks, and when our ability to hear or nonvisually discern traffic is obstructed. Drivers who fail to drive within the speed limit are problematic in all of the obvious ways, but also because when we make decisions about crossing, walking, and other navigation, we are assuming they are driving at the regular rate of speed; thus, when they are travelling faster, we don't know this until we are hurt by these drivers.

Speed monitoring systems are necessary for traffic speed enforcement. Police officers cannot be everywhere, and these systems make it so they don't have to be. Moreover, they serve as a natural deterrence to speeding.

These systems have evolved such that privacy is protected. We use similar systems throughout the state for toll way monitoring, bus lane monitoring, and for red light enforcement.

For this reason, we ask for a favorable report on HB0256. For questions, please contact me at [President@nfbmd.org](mailto:President@nfbmd.org) or at 443-426-4110.

