



NATIONAL FEDERATION
OF THE BLIND
MARYLAND

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To: House Government, Labor, & Elections Committee

The members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland urge the House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee to give a favorable report to HB0394 – Construction of Sidewalks and Crosswalks as Safe Alternative Routes to Public Schools. Too often, the needs and rights of pedestrians are ignored in favor of requirements for the driving public. It is critical to prioritize children and pedestrians in school zones, as these are the most vulnerable in the communities. Schools are by nature built so that children can walk to and from them, so ensuring safe sidewalks is critical.

The bill addresses the need for reporting progress, or lack thereof, on developing safe routes to schools by posting a report on county websites. The bill even tells counties what to do if they don't have jurisdiction over a section of road needed to build safe routes. It outlines requirements for working with whoever has control and tells them to do it judiciously.

This bill will help blind parents of children as well as blind children themselves. Blind parents frequently have to cope with no sidewalks or crosswalks. Having the alternative of using safe routes to schools will alleviate the many problems that blind parents and other blind adults face. Blind children will be able to develop good habits with regard to safety.

For those reasons, we ask for a favorable report on HB0394. For questions, please contact me at President@nfbmd.org or at 443-426-4110.