



Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc.

Continuing the Missions of the Stephanie Roper Committee and Foundation, Inc.

☎ 877-VICTIM-1 (877-842-8461) ✉ mail@mdcrimevictims.org 🌐 mdcrimevictims.org

LETTER IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 66

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Headquarters

1001 Prince George's Boulevard
Suite 750
Upper Marlboro, MD 20774
301-952-0063
877-842-8461 (toll free)
240-929-0526 (fax)

Baltimore

1 North Charles Street
Suite 700
Baltimore, MD 21201

**Carroll, Howard, &
Baltimore Counties**

Oakland Manor
5430 Vantage Point Road
Columbia, MD 21044
240-335-4032

Eastern Shore

240-335-4012

**Frederick &
Montgomery Counties**

240-335-4021

Southern Maryland

301-952-0063

Western Maryland

59 Prospect Square
Suite 6
Cumberland, MD 21502
240-335-4013

On behalf of the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center (MCVRC), I urge your support for Senate Bill 66 Jamari's Law. MCVRC provides legal services for crime victims throughout Maryland and is the largest nonprofit of its kind in the country. We write on behalf of our clients whose family members have been victims of vehicular manslaughter.

Senate Bill 66 should receive support from both sides of the political aisle. It allows the court to impose more serious penalties as appropriate when a person is convicted of vehicular manslaughter but does not mandate a minimum sentence. Senate Bill 66 allows a court to review the particular facts of each case to impose an appropriate sentence. The current maximum sentence of ten years does not allow our courts to address the most serious of these crimes. Twenty years give the courts a larger range of possible sentences, recognizing the vastly differing circumstances of every vehicular manslaughter offense.

Maryland's Highway Safety Office and the National Highway Traffic Safety Association (NHTSA) publish data concerning the traffic fatalities in Maryland and across the country. The number of people in our state killed by reckless and dangerous driving is immense. 621 traffic fatalities were counted in Maryland in 2023 including 577 separate crashes. 35% of those crashes involved a driver with alcohol in their system. (<https://www.fars.nhtsa.dot.gov/States/StatesCrashesAndAllVictims.aspx> <https://zerodeathsmd.gov/resources/crashdata/>)

Senate Bill 66 will allow the most serious cases to be appropriately sentenced. On behalf of Maryland victims, we ask you to pass Senate Bill 66. Our advocates regularly hear from survivors who feel that current penalties do not reflect the gravity of the harm they have suffered. This is a small way Maryland can work towards restoring confidence in the justice system and improve community safety.

Please vote in favor of Senate Bill 66. This vote will support those who have lost family members to the dangerous driving of others.

Sincerely,

Laura Corbett Wilt, Senior Supervising Attorney
202-335-4004; lwilt@mdcrimevictims.org

Joined by: Joanna Mupanduki, Deputy Director & Kurt Wolfgang, Executive Director