

Keith A Brooks
44478 Moss Ct. Callaway, MD 20620
January 20, 2026

To:

Judiciary Committee
Maryland General Assembly

**Re: Testimony Regarding Proposed Changes to Penalties for
Manslaughter by Vehicle or Vessel (Gross Negligence)**

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding the proposed amendments to Maryland's penalties for manslaughter by vehicle or vessel involving gross negligence. I appreciate the committee's continued work examining matters of public safety, justice, and accountability on Maryland roadways and waterways. I am in favor of Maryland adopting Jamari's law. There are too many innocent lives being lost due to the actions of individuals who do not value the life of others, evident by their actions.

Under current Maryland law, manslaughter by vehicle or vessel involving gross negligence is a felony punishable by up to 10 years of incarceration and/or a fine of up to \$5,000. For individuals with a prior conviction involving similar offenses, including manslaughter by vehicle or vessel (gross or criminal negligence), homicide by motor vehicle while under the influence, or life-threatening injury by motor vehicle while impaired, the maximum penalty increases to up to 15 years and/or a fine of up to \$10,000.

The bill under consideration proposes increasing these maximum penalties to 20 years for a first conviction and 30 years for a subsequent conviction. This proposed change raises important questions about proportionality, deterrence, sentencing consistency, and the seriousness with which the State responds to incidents involving grossly negligent operation of a vehicle or vessel resulting in loss of life.

The committee may wish to consider how the proposed changes align with:

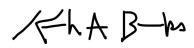
- Existing sentencing structures for comparable offenses in Maryland;
- The need for accountability in cases involving severe negligence leading to fatalities;
- The importance of ensuring sentencing options that reflect the gravity of harm suffered by victims and their families;
- Maryland's broader public-safety and traffic-safety goals.

I appreciate the committee's attention to these issues and your commitment to thorough review of the potential impacts, legal, social, and practical; of modifying the sentencing framework for this category of offenses. Please adopt this law!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Keith A Brooks

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith A Brooks". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.