

JACK BAILEY
Legislative District 29
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties

Budget & Taxation Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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Senate Bill 66 – Manslaughter by Vehicle or Vessel – Increased Penalties (Jamari's Law)

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 66, which would raise the maximum penalties for causing the death of another as a result of the person's driving, operating, or controlling a vehicle or vessel in a grossly negligent manner.

This legislation is named Jamari's Law for Jamari Duckett, who was a resident of St. Mary's County. In 2022, Jamari was the victim of a car accident caused by a driver who was drunk and traveling at a high rate of speed. According to the investigation, immediately prior to the accident, the drunk driver was driving at speeds between 76 and 91 miles per hour on a road where the speed limit is 40 miles per hour. Jamari tragically died as a result of the injuries he sustained in this accident. He was 18 years old.

The St. Mary's County State's Attorney's Office successfully prosecuted the drunk driver in this case, who was sentenced to the maximum penalty of 10 years. As this is considered a non-violent offense, it is possible for this individual to serve about a quarter of their sentence in prison. This means that, when considering diminution credits and the possibility of parole, the offender could be released in as little as 2½ years. I believe that this is far too short a time for the crime of manslaughter by vehicle or vessel.

I believe this legislation will continue the work that we have done to combat drunk driving in Maryland. Having served as the primary sponsor of this legislation in previous years, I have seen how many families in Maryland have been affected by tragedies caused by the reckless decisions of another driver and have been deeply moved by their advocacy on this issue. I am proud to co-sponsor this legislation to make our roads safer in support of Jamari's family and all Maryland families who have suffered such a tragedy, and I thank Senator West for introducing this legislation this year.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 66. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Bailey".

Senator Jack Bailey