

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

I'm Ron Weiss, a Fort Washington resident, a founding member of the MD 210 Traffic Safety Committee, and a Board Member of SafeRoadsMD. **I respectfully urge a favorable report on House Bill 938.**

HB 938 gives local jurisdictions a limited, practical tool to enforce one of the clearest and most important rules in the Maryland Vehicle Law: when a pedestrian is using a crosswalk, the driver must stop. Too often, that rule exists on paper but not on the street. A marked crosswalk should mean safety. If drivers routinely fail to yield, then pedestrians, including children, seniors, transit riders, and people with disabilities, are left to absorb the risk.

This bill is carefully bounded. It does not create a criminal offense. It creates a civil citation only. It provides public notice, signage, and the opportunity to contest liability in District Court. Violations are not moving violations, do not add points, and may not be used for insurance purposes. The bill also applies existing standards for the use, processing, and disposal of recorded images and associated data, and it prohibits per-ticket compensation for contractors. Those are the kinds of guardrails this Committee should want in any automated enforcement bill.

HB 938 is also sound public policy because it ties enforcement to safety improvements. After implementation and administrative costs are covered, remaining fine revenue from crosswalk monitoring systems must be used to improve safety at the monitored crosswalks through infrastructure enhancements such as HAWK signals, beacons, raised crosswalks, pylons, and pedestrian push-button systems. That keeps the focus where it belongs: preventing injury and death.

The bill is also accountable. A jurisdiction cannot use this technology unless it is authorized by local law after notice and a public hearing, and locations must be approved before deployment. The program sunsets after five years. The bill also requires reporting on warnings, citations, costs, revenue, system performance, and whether the systems actually reduce violations, crashes, and pedestrian injuries. If the tool works, the State will know. If it does not, the State will know that too.

The safety problem is real. Materials submitted in support of HB 938 described widespread failure-to-yield behavior at observed crosswalks, including very high noncompliance rates in both Anne Arundel and Montgomery County observations. Those materials also pointed to Maryland pedestrian fatality trends and to the success of other automated enforcement efforts, including a reported 70% reduction in unsafe driving in Prince George's County's stop sign program. That is exactly why a narrow, accountable pilot authority makes sense.

For Prince George's County and other included jurisdictions, HB 938 offers a way to protect people walking near schools, transit stops, neighborhood crossings, and other known conflict points without waiting years for full reconstruction at every location. Enforcement will not solve every pedestrian safety problem, but it can reinforce the law while jurisdictions work on the engineering changes that are also needed.

HB 938 is narrow, measured, and accountable. It respects due process, includes privacy protections, and directs resources back into safer crosswalks. I respectfully ask for a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Ron Weiss