



Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc.

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

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LETTER IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 873

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On behalf of the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center (MCVRC), I urge your support for House Bill 873, 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.

House Bill 873 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. House Bill 873 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 substantial. 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/>)

House Bill 873 strengthens sentencing so that the most serious offenses receive penalties proportionate to their severity. On behalf of Maryland victims, we ask you to pass House Bill 873. Our advocates regularly hear from survivors who feel that current penalties do not reflect the gravity of the harm they have suffered. Strengthening these penalties is one small way Maryland can help restore confidence in the justice system and enhance community safety. Please vote in favor of House Bill 873. This vote will support those who have lost family members to the dangerous driving of others.

Sincerely,

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