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Legislative District 22
Prince George's County

Judiciary Committee

Chair, Public Safety Subcommittee

Chair, Prince George's
County House Delegation



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 4, 2026

The Honorable J. Sandy Bartlett
Chair of the House Judiciary Committee
100 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

House Bill 686

Good afternoon Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and members of the House Judiciary Committee. I am Delegate Nicole Williams, and I will be testifying in favor of House Bill 686, also known as **Vehicle Laws - Eluding Police - Penalties (Zoey's Law)**. This legislation alters the penalties for attempting to elude a police officer when that attempt results in the death of another person.


This legislation is named in honor of three year old Zoey Harrison, who was tragically killed in March 2025 during a high-speed police chase in Prince George's County when a fleeing suspect struck the car carrying her and her mother, who were both uninvolved in the pursuit. This legislation addresses a gap in current Maryland law that treats most fleeing offenses, even when they cause the death of another, as misdemeanors. This legislation will automatically elevate charges in deadly pursuits, create felony consequences for reckless fleeing even if no one is injured, and emphasize that fleeing law enforcement is a serious and high-risk crime.

Zoey's Law will alter the penalties for eluding a police officer by classifying a violation as a felony and, for a first offense, providing a term of imprisonment not exceeding five years or a fine not exceeding \$5,000 or both, and, for a second or subsequent offense, providing a term of imprisonment not exceeding ten years or a fine not exceeding \$5,000 or both.

Localities like Prince George's County are seeing an increase in reckless, high-speed chases by individuals eluding police. The death of a child, like three year old Zoey Harrison, deserves more than a traffic-level misdemeanor.

For these reasons, I urge this committee to give a favorable report on House Bill 686.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Nicole Williams', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Delegate Nicole A. Williams, Esq.