



HB973 -- Vehicle Laws - Violations Involving Pedestrians or Bicyclists –  
Penalties (Pedestrian Safety Act of 2020)

House Environment & Transportation Committee

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Josh Feldmark

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Position: Support

My name is Joshua Feldmark and I write this as a representative of Bike Maryland as well as the undersigned organizations. We represent cyclists of all abilities across the state, Cyclists who ride 5 miles around the park with their families, for transportation, to a 100 mile ride. Bike Maryland has over 18,000 members from across the state. Additionally, we consistently organize or advocate on behalf of pedestrians and many other non vehicle transportation users.

Mode shift to walking and biking will benefit the state’s economy and environment. In a substantial investment scenario, considering increases in public transportation ridership due to active transportation connections to transit, short trips converted to biking and walking, and trip length reductions due to induced mixed use, biking and walking could lead to an annual reduction of 54 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions around the country.<sup>1</sup> Walkable and bikeable communities also bring an array of economic benefits, including increased economic activity at local businesses, a greater ability to attract new economic development, recreational tourism and increased property values.<sup>2</sup>

Mode shift will only be successful, however, if people feel and are safe when walking or cycling. There are nearly 3,000 pedestrians injured or killed annually in

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.railstotrails.org/resourcehandler.ashx?name=active-transportation-transforms->

<sup>2</sup> Id. at 40.

Maryland and the number of pedestrian fatalities has continued to climb in recent years. Additionally, low-income communities experience twice as many pedestrian fatalities as wealthier communities.

As you are aware, this bill does two very important things to help promote pedestrian safety in Maryland. The first is a moderate increase in penalties assessed for failures to yield and other violations that severely endanger pedestrians and cyclists. The second is placing the funds raised through these fines into the “Pedestrian Safety Fund” which will use this money to invest in pedestrian safety infrastructure. All too often adequate safety infrastructure is de-prioritized when competing for general fund dollars and so presents an eloquent (albeit partial) solution in dedicating money to an appropriate level of investment

We urge a favorable report

This testimony is cosigned by:

