



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

BILL: **House Bill 973 - Vehicle Laws - Violations Involving Pedestrians or Bicyclists - Penalties (Pedestrian Safety Act of 2020)**

SPONSOR: **Delegate Stewart, *et al.***

HEARING DATE: **February 27, 2020**

COMMITTEE: **Environment and Transportation**

CONTACT: **Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411**

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 973 - Vehicle Laws - Violations Involving Pedestrians or Bicyclists - Penalties (Pedestrian Safety Act of 2020)** which establishes a fine in most instances of not less than \$150 for traffic violations relating to the driver of a vehicle failing to stop or yield to pedestrian or bicycle traffic. It also extends similar penalties for violations involving the site or mobility impaired. The bill appropriates the revenue of the fines collected to the Pedestrian Safety Fund. Finally, **House Bill 973** prioritizes the administration of the Fund for the enhancement of the safety and quality of pedestrian and bicycle transportation near the schools and school bus stops.

House Bill 973 will have a positive impact on both Prince George's County's and Maryland's residents because pedestrian and bicycle safety are issues that affect every community in Maryland; young and old, drives and non-drivers, daytime and at night. According to the 2018 Maryland Pedestrian Safety Program Area Brief, 92 percent of pedestrian-involved crashes in Maryland in 2018 resulted in injury or death.

The County supports **House Bill 973** in the hope that the associated penalty will assist in reducing the number of fatalities in coming years by changing driver behavior. Additionally, the measure also supports the pedestrian and bicycle safety components of the State's and the County's Vision Zero initiatives.

Annually, Maryland drivers are involved in over 3,000 pedestrian crashes. They are particularly dangerous, as almost 92 percent of them resulted in an injury or fatality. For example, in 2017, pedestrian crashes accounted for three percent of the State's approximately 115,000 crashes but accounted for close to 19 percent of statewide fatalities.

Walking and biking are activities that everyone should be able to under take safely throughout the state of Maryland. Many unnecessary injuries and fatalities occur because of distraction or impairment, or just plain carelessness. While **House Bill 973** will not rid the state of crashes

involving pedestrians and cyclists, its provisions may help to encourage safer, more attentive behavior on our roadways. For these reasons, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS House Bill 973** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.