



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Luke Clippinger Chairman and
Members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Chief David Morris, Co-Chair, MCPA, Joint Legislative Committee
Sheriff Darren Popkin, Co-Chair, MSA, Joint Legislative Committee
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: February 23, 2021

RE: **HB 855 - Criminal Law – Life-Threatening Injury Involving a Motor Vehicle
or Vessel – Criminal Negligence (Wade’s Law)**

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT** HB 855. This bill would establish the offense of life-threatening injury by motor vehicle or vessel as criminal negligence. A violator would be guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction is subject to a maximum penalty of imprisonment not exceeding 18 months or a fine not exceeding \$5,000 or both.

The intent of HB 855 is to establish the offense of life-threatening injury by motor vehicle as criminal negligence and standardize the penalty provision with other similar offenses. Under current law, two offenses (causing life-threatening injury by motor vehicle or vessel while under the influence of alcohol or under the influence of alcohol per se or while impaired by a CDS; and causing life-threatening injury by motor vehicle or vessel while impaired by alcohol or drugs) are misdemeanors with maximum penalties of 3 years and \$5,000, or 2 years and \$3,000, respectively. Considering the similar nature of these offenses, establishing the offense and creating a comparable penalty seems appropriate.

For this reason, MCPA and MSA **SUPPORT** HB 855 and urge a **FAVORABLE** committee report.