



**AAA Mid-Atlantic's Testimony In Support Of SB 0025 - Reckless And Negligent Driving –
Death Of Another – Must–Appear Violation
(Sherry's and Christopher's Law)**

Sponsor: Senator Cassilly

- AAA Mid-Atlantic **supports SB 0025**, which provides “that a person charged with reckless or negligent driving that contributes to an accident [crash] resulting in the death of another person must appear in court and may not prepay the fine.”
- Over the years, we have seen countless cases where drivers involved in fatal crashes in Maryland received a slap on the wrist and a fine for causing a crash that killed another.
- One such crash involved a young driver who crossed the yellow line on a Maryland road in Northern Baltimore County crashing into another vehicle, killing the driver, 61-year old Chuck Stoecker, in November of 2007.
- The reckless driver did not have to appear in court for his violation; he was permitted to mail in the payment for his citation.
- We saw this again in a high-profile crash in August 2008 that involved a driver who fell asleep while crossing the Bay Bridge, causing a fatal crash that sent a tractor trailer plunging into the water and claiming the life of the truck driver, John R. Short, Sr.
- The driver who was charged with causing the crash, Candy Lynn Baldwin, also did not have to appear in court for her violations. Ms. Baldwin merely paid \$470 in fines to settle the tickets according to the Queen Anne's State's Attorney, as stated in the *Annapolis Capital* newspaper.
- And we saw this for a third time a few months later in October 2008 when teenager Ryan Didone, for whom this bill is named, was killed riding in a vehicle that veered off the road and crashed. The driver of the vehicle was charged with traffic citations totaling \$710 in fines and never appeared in court.
- There was no opportunity for the families of Chuck Stoecker, John Short, and Ryan Didone to have their day in court to express their grievances face-to-face with the driver and before a judge.
- Deadly crashes should not be treated the same as non-life threatening crashes. It should be mandatory for drivers involved in fatal crashes to appear in court and not have the convenience of paying a citation by mail for the loss of a life.
- Victims' families should be afforded the opportunity to have their day in court, too, for a tragedy that will affect them for the rest of their lives.
- AAA Mid-Atlantic supports **SB 0025** and respectfully urges the Committee to render a favorable report.

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