

DELEGATE MARY A. LEHMAN
Legislative District 21
Prince George's and
Anne Arundel Counties

Environment and Transportation
Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 0020 Vehicle Laws – Horse Riding – Helmet Requirement for Minors
SUPPORT

GOOD AFTERNOON CHAIR BARVE, VICE CHAIR STEIN AND ESTEEMED COLLEAGUES.
FOR THE RECORD, I'M DELEGATE MARY LEHMAN ASKING FOR YOUR FAVORABLE
REPORT FOR HB 0020, A BILL REQUIRING HELMETS FOR EQUESTRIANS UNDER AGE
18 WHO ARE RIDING ON PUBLIC TRAILS AND OTHER PUBLIC PROPERTY.

IF THIS BILL SOUNDS FAMILIAR TO SOME OF YOU, IT'S BECAUSE THE COMMITTEE
VOTED IT FAVORABLY LAST YEAR AND IT PASSED THE FULL HOUSE. THE SENATE
JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE NEVER MOVED IT. I AM PRESENTING THE BILL
AS IT PASSED OUT OF THIS COMMITTEE AND OF THE FULL HOUSE, WITH JUST ONE
CHANGE EXEMPTING AMISH AND MENONITE RIDERS.

THE BILL REQUIRES THAT ADULTS WHO ARE SUPERVISING MINORS ENSURE THAT
YOUTH RIDERS ARE WEARING A PROPERLY FITTED, SECURED HELMET THAT MEETS
NATIONAL HEADGEAR SAFETY STANDARDS.

EQUESTRIAN INJURIES ARE PRIMARILY THE RESULT OF A FALL; AND FALLING FROM
A HORSE IS NOT AN UNCOMMON OCCURRENCE. THE GOAL OF HB 0020 IS TO
PROTECT YOUNG EQUESTRIANS FROM CONCUSSIONS AND OTHER SERIOUS BRAIN

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OR HEAD INJURIES BY REQUIRING THEM TO WEAR A HELMET WHEN RIDING ON PUBLIC LAND. YOU WILL HEAR FROM SOME YOUNG RIDERS AND OTHER EQUESTRIANS ABOUT INJURIES THEY OR OTHERS THEY KNOW HAVE SUSTAINED EVEN WHEN THEY WERE WEARING A HELMET AND HOW QUICKLY THOSE INCIDENTS OCCUR INVOLVING EVEN THE MOST SKILLED RIDERS.

CONCUSSION SAFETY AND PREVENTION HAS BECOME A BIG ISSUE IN SPORTS. THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION DEFINES A CONCUSSION AS A BRAIN INJURY CAUSED BY A BUMP OR BLOW TO THE HEAD THAT CAN CHANGE THE WAY THE BRAIN NORMALLY WORKS. EVEN WHAT SEEMS TO BE A MILD BUMP ON THE HEAD CAN BE SERIOUS.

WHILE THERE IS NO CONCUSSION-PROOF HELMET, AN EQUESTRIAN HELMET THAT MEETS OR EXCEEDS THE STANDARDS OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF TESTING AND MATERIALS FOR PROTECTIVE HEADGEAR USED IN EQUESTRIAN RIDING, WILL HELP PROTECT MINORS.

HB 0020 ONLY APPLIES TO MINORS RIDING HORSES ON HIGHWAYS, PUBLIC RIDING PATHS OR OTHER PUBLIC PROPERTY. IT ALSO APPLIES TO DONKEYS, MULES AND PONIES. IT DOES NOT APPLY TO: YOUTH PRACTICING FOR OR COMPETING IN

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EVENTS WHERE HELMETS ARE NOT WORN; THOSE CROSSING A PUBLIC ROAD THAT SEPARATES PRIVATE LAND; AND THOSE ENGAGED IN AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES.

WHILE AN ADULT PRESENT AND DIRECTLY SUPERVISING A MINOR MAY RECEIVE A WRITTEN CITATION, IF THE ADULT IS SUPERVISING MULTIPLE YOUTH WHO ARE NOT WEARING HELMETS, HE OR SHE WOULD RECEIVE A SINGLE CITATION. THE GOAL IS TO PREVENT SUBSEQUENT VIOLATIONS.

THE USE OF AN APPROPRIATE EQUESTRIAN HELMET SHOULD BE AS COMMONPLACE AS SEAT-BELTS OR INFANT AND BOOSTER SEATS FOR CHILDREN RIDING IN CARS. MD REQUIRES KIDS TO WEAR BIKE HELMETS, WHICH IT SHOULD, BUT A FALL FROM A HORSE IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN A FALL FROM A BICYCLE. HB 0020 WILL HELP SAFEGUARD YOUNG EQUESTRIANS FROM SERIOUS HEAD TRAUMA AS A RESULT OF A FALL.

THANK YOU AND I URGE A FAVORABLE REPORT.