

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

Environment and Transportation  
Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 317  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
301-858-3114 · 410-841-3114  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3114  
Mary.Lehman@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**HB20 Vehicle Laws – Horse Riding – Helmet Requirement for Minors**  
**SUPPORT**

GOOD AFTERNOON CHAIR SMITH, VICE CHAIR WALDSTREICHER AND ESTEEMED MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE. FOR THE RECORD, I'M DELEGATE MARY LEHMAN ASKING FOR YOUR FAVORABLE REPORT FOR HB20, 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 I PRESENTED THIS BILL TO YOU LAST YEAR. THIS YEAR, IT OVERWHELMINGLY PASSED THE FULL HOUSE, 125-12. I AM PRESENTING THE BILL AS IT PASSED OUT OF THIS COMMITTEE AND OF THE FULL HOUSE, WITH AN AMENDMENT THAT BROADENS THE AREAS TO REQUIRE HELMETS TO INCLUDE RECREATIONAL, EDUCATIONAL, OR COMPETITIVE EQUESTRIAN ACTIVITIES FACILITIES.

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 HB20 IS TO PROTECT YOUNG EQUESTRIANS FROM CONCUSSIONS AND OTHER SERIOUS BRAIN OR HEAD INJURIES BY REQUIRING THEM TO WEAR A HELMET WHEN RIDING ON PUBLIC LAND.

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.

HB20 APPLIES TO MINORS RIDING HORSES ON HIGHWAYS, PUBLIC RIDING PATHS OR OTHER PUBLIC PROPERTY, AS WELL AS LESSON OR BOARDER BARNs. IT APPLIES TO DONKEYS, MULES AND PONIES, AS WELL AS HORSES. IT DOES **NOT** APPLY TO: YOUTH PRACTICING FOR OR COMPETING IN 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. MARYLAND REQUIRES KIDS TO WEAR BIKE HELMETS, WHICH IT SHOULD, BUT A FALL FROM A HORSE CAN BE MORE DANGEROUS THAN A FALL FROM A BICYCLE. HB20 WILL HELP SAFEGUARD YOUNG EQUESTRIANS FROM SERIOUS HEAD TRAUMA AS A RESULT OF A FALL.

THANK YOU AND I URGE A FAVORABLE REPORT.