

**Prince George's County – Traffic Control Device Monitoring Systems –  
Authorization – PG 301-24  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
FAVORABLE**

February 8, 2024

Chair Korman and Committee Members,

As the longtime President of the Mount Rainier Elementary PTO, **I write in strong support of HB 364**, which would authorize the use of traffic control device monitoring systems in Prince George's County.

Mount Rainier Elementary has made walkability and pedestrian safety a top priority for many years, long before the tragic deaths of two PGCPSS students at Riverdale Elementary in November. We have been regular participants in National Walk, Bike and Roll to School Day events, served in an advisory role on the City of Mount Rainier's Vision Zero Task Force, and were the model PGCPSS school for walkability in the PGCPSS Climate Change Action Plan. We have also consistently stressed: we cannot expect families to walk to school if we don't also provide them with the safer streets and basic pedestrian safety measures needed to do so.

Immediately after November's tragedy in Riverdale, our PTO led efforts to create Safe Routes PGCPSS, a coalition of 11 schools with more than 8,000 students to deliver a clear message: **every child has the right to get to and from school safely**. We called for immediate action on crossing guards, investing in built infrastructure to improve safety, and long-term policy reforms to re-think and re-design our streets to prioritize pedestrian safety. We were joined by other advocacy groups like Climate Parents of Prince George's, the Washington Area Bicyclist Association, Bike Maryland, and others. Municipalities like the City of Mount Rainier, Town of Brentwood, and City of Greenbelt took action in support of our efforts.

Mount Rainier Elementary PTO advocates for a comprehensive "all of the above" approach. Yes, we need more crossing guards and traditional enforcement of our traffic laws, but we cannot practically hire enough crossing guards or additional police officers to patrol *every* intersection as students walk to and from school. **That is why HB 364 is so important and our top legislative priority in this effort**. Our responsibility to students and families is not making a few *intersections* safer. It is making sure every step from the front door to the classroom – and every street and sidewalk in between – is safe. Anything less is failure.

HB 364 will provide a critical additional tool for local municipalities and Prince George's County to enforce traffic laws and make our streets safer. It will allow them to expand enforcement beyond their current staffing capabilities. We understand that some drivers will not be happy being held responsible for the consequences of their actions. But drivers who disregard stop signs and other traffic control devices will suffer the minor, temporary inconvenience of a ticket.

Students, pedestrians, and cyclists who are struck by impatient drivers ignoring traffic laws too often suffer consequences far more serious and devastating. **It is time for streets that prioritize kids over cars** – and we can't be afraid to say it.

The streets around our schools are not safe. In addition to the two Riverdale Elementary students killed in November, at least two PGCPs employees were killed while walking to work late last year. A grandmother was struck and killed near one of our high schools. *As I was writing this testimony*, I received an email from one of our neighboring schools and coalition partners that a student had been struck by an SUV a few days ago. They survived with minor injuries, but this is a crisis, and it should not take pedestrian deaths or students being struck by cars for this Legislature to act. Our kids can't wait.

**HB 364 is long overdue, and I strongly urge this Committee and the full House of Delegates to pass this legislation this session.** Your action will help save lives and send an unmistakable message to every student, pedestrian, cyclist, and resident: your safety matters – and you have the right to walk, bike or roll through your neighborhood safely.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 364.

Timothy Meyer  
President, Mount Rainier Elementary PTO