



SB 345: Transportation - Vision Zero Advisory Commission - Establishment
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Montgomery County Families for Safe Streets – FAVORABLE
February 13, 2024

Chair Smith and Committee Members,

Montgomery County Families for Safe Streets (MoCo FSS) supports SB 345, to establish a Maryland Vision Zero Advisory Commission. We also support the bill's reporting provisions and other advisory functions. Collectively, these provisions within SB 345 will help reduce roadway fatalities and serious injuries, and are a step in the right direction toward realization of the state's Vision Zero goal of ending roadway fatalities and serious injuries by 2030.

Maryland's Vision Zero law was passed in 2019. In 2020, Maryland experienced 574 roadway fatalities, including 129 pedestrians and 15 bicyclists. In 2021, we experienced 563 roadway fatalities, and 566 in 2022. This past year, estimates put 2023 Maryland roadway fatalities at 601, including 155 pedestrians and, 15 bicyclists.

Maryland is falling down on its commitment to Vision Zero. In fact, as the numbers show, roadway deaths in Maryland and across the Country are on the rise. Something must be done, before 500+ more lives are lost – or, before even ONE more life is lost. As lawmakers, and as a State government, we owe it to our children, our neighbors, our community members – and, most of all, to the families who have endured these horrible tragedies. The vast majority of roadway deaths are not “accidents.” They are preventable, and we must take every action to prevent further losses.

The Commission would advise the governor and state agencies on Vision Zero implementation. It would provide helpful and actionable advice on policies, programs, and services, reducing existing barriers to progress - including state and local laws, policies, and regulations that may be holding us back.

MoCo FSS particularly appreciates the inclusion of advocates and organizations representing people with disabilities on the envisioned Commission. We would ask that, as this Commission is formed and developed, you also consider explicitly adding representation from families and loved ones of those who have been lost. It would be impactful to include this important perspective, as these individuals have suffered most greatly from the State's lack of progress on Vision Zero implementation.

MoCo FSS urges a Favorable SB 345 Committee report, and General Assembly enactment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this legislation.

Kristy Daphnis, Steering Committee Member, Montgomery County Families for Safe Streets