



February 17, 2025

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
The Honorable Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Maryland General Assembly
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Smith and Vice Chair Waldstreicher:

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates), an alliance of consumer, safety, medical, public health and law enforcement groups and insurance companies working together to pass highway and auto safety laws that prevent crashes, save lives, reduce injuries, and contain costs, supports enactment of Senate Bill (SB) 710/House Bill (HB) 883. This legislation will improve safety by prohibiting criminally negligent driving to curb its deadly and damaging incidence and impact.

In 2023, there were an estimated 610ⁱ traffic fatalities in the state, which represents a 31 percent increase since 2013, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).ⁱⁱ Moreover, state data show there were approximately 28,600 injury crashes and 110,400 total crashes in 2023.ⁱⁱⁱ

In addition to being tragic and devastating to Marylanders, first responders and visitors, motor vehicle crashes are costly. Maryland incurred \$5.9 billion in economic harm, which is equivalent to \$977 per resident, due to motor vehicle crashes according to a 2019 analysis.^{iv} When updated for inflation alone, in 2025, costs would equate to \$7.46 billion to the state and \$1,233 per resident.^v Clearly, traffic safety is a serious issue that urgently needs improvement.

SB 710/HB 883 is a sensible way to make Maryland safer by holding the most dangerous drivers accountable. We urge you to advance SB 710/HB 883.

Sincerely,

Catherine Chase, President

ⁱ Traffic Safety Facts: Crash Stats, Early Estimate of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities in 2023, NHTSA, April 2024, DOT HS 813 561, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813561>.

ⁱⁱ State Traffic Safety Information for Maryland (2022), NHTSA, available at <https://cdan.dot.gov/STSI/stsi.htm>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Statewide Crash Summary Report (2023), Maryland Department of Transportation available at: <https://zerodeathsmd.gov/resources/crashdata/>.

^{iv} The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2019, NHTSA, Feb. 2023, DOT HS 813 403, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813403>.

^v CPI Inflation Calculator, BLS, January 2019 to January 2025 dollars, available at <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>.