



**Testimony for the DC Council Committee on Business and Economic Development Regarding
Bill 25-56: The Dram Shop Clarification Amendment Act of 2023**

June 15, 2023

Dear Chair McDuffie and Business and Economic Development Committee Members,

On behalf of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) and its 6,000 members across the Washington Region, I submit testimony in opposition to Bill 25-56. WABA opposes the Dram Shop Clarification Amendment Act of 2023 proposal because it restricts the ability for victims to seek justice following an impaired driving crash.

WABA empowers people to ride bikes, build connections, and transform places. We envision a just and sustainable transportation system where walking, biking, and transit are the best ways to get around. We are focused on policies and projects that help people feel comfortable and stay safe as they get around by bike, foot, and public transportation, including by preventing traffic fatalities and injuries.

Despite setting Vision Zero goals, the District is moving too slowly and has not dedicated the necessary support and funding to eliminate traffic-related serious injuries and fatalities. Far too many people continue to be seriously injured or killed on our streets every year. While we work to advance efforts that will help us reach Vision Zero, we believe it is important that people who are injured in a traffic crash get the support they need and deserve.

The safety and mobility trends across the country and in the District are moving in the wrong direction:

- The [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) reports that 30% of all traffic-related deaths involved alcohol-impaired drivers, and is the leading cause of traffic fatalities. This was a 14.3% increase compared to the number of crash deaths involving alcohol-impaired drivers in 2019.
- According to the [National Safety Council](#), 1,260 bicyclists were killed in 2020 across the country, up 16% from the year before and an increase of 44% over the previous decade.

- In the District, [traffic deaths reached a 14-year high in 2021](#), when 40 people were killed on our streets.

Until these trends change, people biking, walking - and even driving - will continue to be at risk from unsafe driving. The consequences can be devastating if a drunk driver hits a person walking or biking with their vehicle. Consuming alcohol before getting behind the wheel leads to diminished cognitive abilities that can increase the chances of a driver not recognizing a person on a bike or a person walking, or registering them until too late.

In addition to addressing the infrastructure and behavior contributing to these trends, the District must address the needs of people who have been impacted by traffic violence. Bill 25-56 does not support accountability for people most at risk of serious injuries or death from traffic-related incidents. The changes proposed in this bill make it more difficult for bicyclists to bring a claim if they are injured by a person who has been overserved in a restaurant or bar.

WABA opposes this legislation as it limits the rights of victims of impaired driving crashes to seek just compensation following the preventable violent crime of drunk driving. We urge the committee to protect the rights of victims of drunk driving.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kalli Krumpos
Senior Organizing Manager