



HB0519: Bicycles, Play Vehicles, and Unicycles - Authorizations and Requirements
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Washington Area Bicyclist Association – FAVORABLE

March 27, 2023

Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

Transportation safety is a paramount mobility concern. HB0519 would make bicycling safer. The Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA), an advocacy organization with 1,300 Maryland members, supports the bill.

Bicycling in traffic with cars, trucks, and buses is dangerous and discouraging for bicyclists, yet Maryland law currently prohibits people, including children, from riding a bicycle (or a scooter) on a sidewalk unless expressly allowed by local ordinance. Montgomery and Howard Counties do have an ordinance to allow bikes on sidewalks and have experienced no significant issues. It's time to make this simple and sensible provision uniform across the state, by enacting HB0519.

Maryland is committed to Vision Zero, a goal of zero motor vehicle-related fatalities and serious injuries by 2030. We are building out a network of bike lanes and trails while working to make neighborhood streets safer for all users. Allowing bicycling on sidewalks is part of this important in-progress work.

Allowing bicycling on sidewalks also advances equity. Many lower-income individuals rely on a bicycle for trips to work, school, shopping, and other destinations, and bike for recreation, but live and travel in areas that lack safe bikeways.

Making bikes on sidewalks the default, via HB0519, will help Maryland meet our transportation safety and equity and Vision Zero pledges.

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association urges a Favorable HB0519 JPR report and Senate floor vote.

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