



TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE

SB 16 Safe Access for All (SAFE) Roads Act of 2023

POSITION: Support

BY: Nancy Soreng, LWVMD President

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The League of Women Voters of Maryland (LWVMD) agrees that SB 16 should be made law to create another tool our state uses to make all of us safer. LWVMD's positions encourage individuals to conserve natural resources and reduce energy consumption. In addition, we support incentives which promote use of mass transit and other alternative modes of travel. If the use of bicycles and modes of travel that involve pedestrians aren't safe, that is hardly an incentive. No one wants fatalities to occur. Guidelines that are transparent and readily available for everyone to see can help make us all safer while traveling, regardless of the destination or recreational use. Maryland should help promote mobility safety and a good way to do this is by monitoring and rectifying problems for pedestrians and bicyclists.

One remedy doesn't fit every situation. By evaluating each unique project, then designing the best way to make pedestrians and bicyclists safer, we may actually save taxpayer dollars. Having a set procedure and guidelines that are used when a project is first proposed without redesigning and redoing a project is wise spending. Using funds wisely in support of Vision Zero and safety guidelines with the government benefits everyone.

By evaluating all roads for safety first, a pattern can be more easily followed and modified for each situation to help provide a safe environment. Both individuals and agencies are well intentioned in promoting safety, but may not have knowledge of or reviewed all the situations that make a specific location unique.

SB 16 provides a way to examine gaps in existing infrastructure and helps to make it safer for users whether it is a shared-use path, sidewalk, bike lane, or road. The public deserves a safer environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.

LWVMD urges a favorable report on SB 16.