

TO: The Honorable Brian E. Frosh, Chairman
Members, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
The Honorable Nancy J. King

FROM: Joseph A. Schwartz, III
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise

DATE: February 14, 2012

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 460 – *Vehicle Laws – Child Safety Seats and Seat Belts - Penalty*

On behalf of MedChi, the Maryland State Medical Society and the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP), we support Senate Bill 460.

Senate Bill 460 provides an important enhancement to the enforcement of Maryland's safety seat requirements. The current penalty for failure to comply with the law is \$25. This penalty has remained unchanged since the enactment of the original law and is insufficient to compel compliance. It is presently cheaper to pay the fine than to purchase an appropriate child safety seat. Consequently, it is unlikely that those charged with failure to utilize appropriate child restraint actually modify their behavior and acquire a child safety seat. Senate Bill 460 will remedy this situation by increasing the penalty to \$75.00. It should be noted that current law allows a Court to waive the penalty if a person demonstrates to the Court that they have purchased or otherwise acquired a child safety seat. Consequently, while \$75.00 may seem like a significant increase, the purchase of a safety seat will likely eliminate the penalty. MedChi and MDAAP believe the current penalty is too small to be meaningful or alter behavior and urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 460.

For more information call:

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