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TO: The Honorable Brian E. Frosh, Chair
Members, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
The Honorable John Astle

FROM: Joseph A. Schwartz, III
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
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DATE: February 11, 2014

RE: **OPPOSE** – Senate Bill 173 – *Vehicle Laws – Protective Headgear Requirement for Motorcycle Riders - Exception*

On behalf of MedChi, the Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi) and the Maryland Chapter, Academy of Emergency Physicians (MDACEP), we oppose Senate Bill 173.

Senate Bill 173 proposes to make certain exceptions to the current motorcycle helmet law provided an individual is 21 and has more than \$10,000 in health insurance. Further, it requires the State to evaluate the impact of the change in the law with respect to motorcycle injuries and fatalities. The changes made to the law sunset in three years.

The opponents to Maryland's motorcycle helmet requirements have tried to repeal the requirements for a number of years under different proposed exceptions, to no avail. Senate Bill 173 is clearly aimed at the same objective in a manner that appears to respond to concerns about an increased cost to the health care system due to the uninsured.

There is no ambiguity in the data related to the benefits of mandatory helmet laws. In Maryland, the incidence of injury and death decreased dramatically following the passage of the current helmet requirements. \$10,000 is a mere drop in the bucket of the costs that are incurred in serious motorcycle accidents when no helmet is worn. No benefit can be gained by putting individuals at risk just because they may have a modest amount of health insurance. MedChi and MDACEP urge an unfavorable report.

For more information call:

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