



*The Maryland State Medical Society*

1211 Cathedral Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201-5516  
410.539.0871  
Fax: 410.547.0915

1.800.488.1056  
www.medchi.org

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

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

DATE: February 21, 2012

RE: **OPPOSE** – Senate Bill 488 – *Vehicle Laws – Protective Headgear Requirement for Motorcycle Riders - Exceptions*

---

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi) which represents over 7,300 Maryland physicians and their patients opposes Senate Bill 488.

Senate Bill 488 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 488 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 urges an unfavorable report.

**For more information call:**

Joseph A. Schwartz, III  
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
J. Steven Wise  
410-269-1618