

# SCHWARTZ, METZ & WISE, P.A.

ATTORNEYS

20 WEST STREET  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TEL: 410-244-7000

FAX: 410-269-5443

TO: The Honorable Maggie McIntosh, Chairman  
Members, House Environmental Matters Committee  
The Honorable Kirill Reznik

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

DATE: February 5, 2013

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 158 – *Vehicle Laws – Child Safety Seats and Seat Belts - Penalty*

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On behalf of MedChi, the Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi) and the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP), we support House Bill 158.

House Bill 158 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. House Bill 158 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 House Bill 158.

**For more information call:**

Joseph A. Schwartz, III  
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
J. Steven Wise  
410-244-7000