TO: The Honorable Bobby A. Zirkin, Chair
   Members, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
   The Honorable John C. Astle

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

DATE: February 24, 2015

RE: OPPOSE – Senate Bill 612 – Vehicle Laws – Protective Headgear
    Requirement for Motorcycle Riders – Exception

On behalf of the Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi) and the Maryland
Chapter, American College of Emergency Physicians (MDACEP), we oppose Senate
Bill 612.

Senate Bill 612 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 612 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.

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