

Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform

Working together for a criminal justice system that better serves our communities



To: Chair Sandy Bartlett and Judiciary Committee members
2026

March 4,

From: Bill Carlson, and Jenny Zito, MAJR Executive Committee

Subject: **UNF - HB0873 Manslaughter by Vehicle or Vessel - Increased Penalties**

The Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR) asks you to oppose HB 0873, Manslaughter by Vehicle or Vessel - Increased Penalties, which would double the maximum penalty from 10 to 20 years and, for a second offense, doubles the maximum penalty from 15 to 30 years.

Under current law, someone can be convicted of manslaughter by vehicle or vessel if prosecutors prove they drove in a “grossly negligent” manner and killed someone. HB0873 proposes increasing penalties for a crime that requires no showing of intent by the perpetrator to kill anyone, nor plan to kill anyone, nor act with malice aforethought. It is difficult to see how, on balance, increasing this sentence will make Maryland safer. Increased sentences do not increase deterrence, especially for offenses which are unplanned.

The Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform (MAJR) is a nonpartisan, all-volunteer organization of nearly 2000 Marylanders who advocate for sensible evidence-based legislative and policy changes in Maryland's correctional practices. MAJR thanks you for the opportunity to provide input on this legislation and urges the committee to give HB 0873 an unfavorable report.

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A 501c(4) Non-profit Advocacy