

# Family Of Bicyclist Fatally Struck By Elderly Driver Calls For Cognitive Tests At MVA

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BALTIMORE (WJZ)— The family of a Johns Hopkins student who died after a bicycling accident says more needs to be done to test elderly drivers. They took their message to Annapolis Wednesday where they are fighting a proposal they say would make Maryland roads a lot more dangerous.

**Derek Valcourt** has the message from the family of Nathan Krasnopoler.

The family wants the Motor Vehicle Administration to adopt simple tests they say could easily identify high-risk drivers. But it's a sensitive subject, especially for the elderly.

One year ago this month, Nathan Krasnopoler, 20, rode his bicycle around the Johns Hopkins campus when he was struck by an 83-year-old driver and became trapped under her car.

The driver never called for help. Instead, she got out of her car and sat on a nearby wall.

Doctors declared Nathan Krasnopoler brain-dead. He died months later.

"I lost my brother and I shouldn't have. He should still be alive today," Elliot Krasnopoler, Nathan Krasnopoler's brother, said.

Nathan Krasnopoler's brother and mother are now fighting Senate Bill 111 which would renew licenses for eight years instead of the current five-year period.

"It's one of those delicate balances," MVA Administrator John Kuo said.

The MVA administrator says with growing populations and shrinking state budgets, his agency needs to do more work with less money.

"By extending the duration of the current driver's license from its five years to eight years, that will help us smooth out our additional customer flows into the future," Kuo said.

“But in doing that, there’s no provisions in the bill for making sure that drivers are in fact going to be able to safely drive in that eight-year period,” Nathan Krasnopoler’s mother Susan Cohen said.

The family is asking lawmakers to amend the bill to mandate simple cognitive tests at the time of license renewal that could help identify potentially unsafe drivers, including older drivers like the one who struck Nathan Krasnopoler.

“We don’t give our 12 year olds licenses, and there’s a reason for that,” Cohen said. “We really need to make sure that everybody on the road is able to drive safely.”

But MVA officials insist there’s no proof that longer license-renewal periods lead to unsafe roadways. They point out the state already has a program to test seniors for their competency, but only if the seniors are referred by themselves, family members, doctors or law enforcement.

The driver that struck Nathan Krasnopoler agreed to permanently surrender her license as part of a lawsuit settlement. Family members are planning a vigil on Feb. 26– the anniversary of the accident. The vigil will be held at Broadview Apartments at 105 W. 39th Street, where the accident occurred.