

# Mother of Accident Victim Opposes License Renewal Bill

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ANNAPOLIS (February 1, 2012) -- The mother of a young man who died from injuries sustained after being struck by a car driven by an 83-year-old woman, testified Wednesday before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee against proposed legislation that would lengthen the validity of noncommercial driver's licenses.

SB 111 seeks to extend license validity and basic eye examinations from five to eight years.

Nathan Krasnopoler was riding his bicycle on West University Parkway in Baltimore when a car turned into a designated bicycle lane and hit the 20-year-old Johns Hopkins University sophomore. Krasnopoler died August 10 after the family removed his feeding tube.

Susan Cohen, Krasnopoler's mother, opposes the bill and offered an amendment to include periodic Functional Capacity Testing. The testing measures the basic visual, cognitive and physical abilities needed to safely operate motor vehicles.

"I do believe that once you give a license to someone you're obligated to make sure that person is capable of driving safely," Cohen said in an interview Tuesday.

In an interview before his testimony, John Kuo, an administrator with the Motor Vehicle Administration, said his agency is operating with 250 fewer employees and the move to eight-year license renewals would aid efficiency and increase savings.

"Increasing the renewal period from five to eight years will lead to fewer customer visits and shorter wait times, as I'm sure all our customers will welcome," Kuo told the committee.

Kuo estimated 154,000 fewer license renewal transactions by 2018, and 1.5 million fewer

when the bill would be fully phased in by 2028.

Before her testimony, Cohen said she assumed the license renewal extension was a cost cutting measure but said, "I think public safety is more important."

Carol Silldorff, executive director of Bike Maryland, a nonprofit organization that promotes bicycling, testified in support of the Krasnopoler family's amendment.

"We don't care if someone is a teenager or a senior," Silldorff said. "What we care about is public safety."

Sen. Joseph M. Getty, R-Carroll County, concluded the hearing by conveying condolences to the family.

"Our sympathies go out to the family," Getty said. "And if we do pass the bill we want to make sure you understand it's not a reflection of your testimony today. But we just think it's a different topic, that they are two unrelated topic areas."