

# B A L T I M O R E R A V E N S

January 21, 2020

The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones  
Speaker of the House  
101 House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Re: Support for Eliminating Fee-Based Driver's License Suspension in Maryland  
(HB0280 (SB0234), Vehicle Laws – Suspension of Driver's License or Registration –  
Unpaid Citations or Judgments)**

Dear Madame Speaker:

The undersigned Baltimore Ravens executives and players write to voice our support for passage of a bill that would eliminate a harmful practice that disproportionately affects low-income Maryland residents. Specifically, this proposed legislation would repeal the Maryland Department of Motor Vehicles' ("MVA") right to suspend a Maryland resident's driver's license simply because the driver cannot afford to pay traffic-related fines and administrative fees.

Due to the limited reach of public transit in our state, Maryland residents depend heavily on driving as a means of transportation to their places of employment. Having a valid driver's license is pivotal to their employment prospects. Under current state law, however, if an individual cannot afford to pay fines and fees imposed for traffic violations, the MVA can suspend that driver's license.

When applied to those with limited means, these suspensions can have significant collateral consequences. Driver's license suspensions often result in the loss of jobs, exacerbating the inability to pay down debts. Driving is closely linked to employability in Maryland, so pressure to risk driving on a suspended license increases. Because driving with a suspended license is a criminal offense, drivers who are caught undertaking this risk face more fees, fines, and incarceration.

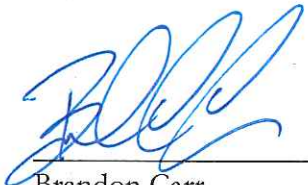
Maryland's current policy imposes a particularly heavy burden on Marylanders with criminal records, specifically those who have recently experienced incarceration. According to the Maryland Department of Corrections, tens of thousands of prisoners are released from Maryland-area correctional facilities every year. In recent years, there has been an increase in federal and state criminal justice reform legislation designed specifically to strengthen the rehabilitative capacity of our prisons and provide educational and job training assistance to ex-offenders. These reforms have paved the way for many low-risk, non-violent offenders who have paid their debts to society to be released from incarceration, return home, and become productive members of our community.

Research shows that the ability to secure stable employment is crucial to ex-offenders' chances of successfully reintegrating into society. However, studies have found that finding and keeping a job is perhaps the greatest obstacle returning citizens face when they come home.

Advocacy groups like the Job Opportunities Task Force have emphasized that removing barriers to employment opportunity is pivotal to reducing recidivism in the ex-offender population and breaking the cycle of crime and poverty in our cities. When applied to returning citizens, Maryland's policy of fee-based driver's license suspensions serves as one such barrier.

We do not purport to be familiar with all the fiscal consequences of this proposed legislation, but we do know that there is a growing consensus among key stakeholders that fee-based driver's license suspension schemes are counterproductive, unfair, and undermine criminal justice reform efforts aimed at making our communities safer. For these reasons, we are proud to join the Office of Attorney General Brian Frosh in supporting passage of the legislation he has sent to you as House Speaker and we humbly request that the committee issue a favorable report.

Sincerely,



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Brandon Carr

President:



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Richard W. Cass



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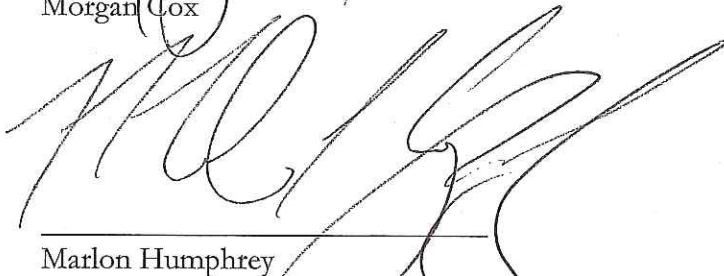
Morgan Cox

General Counsel:



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Brandon M. Etheridge



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Marlon Humphrey

Vice President of Public Relations:



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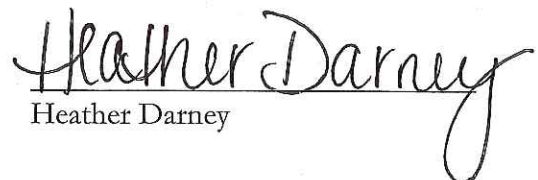
Chad Steele



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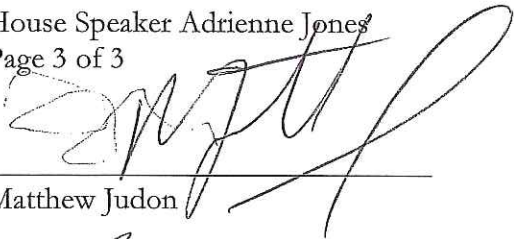
Tony Jefferson

Sr. Director of Community Relations



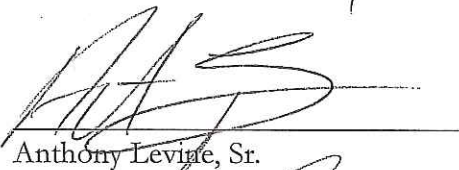
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Heather Darney



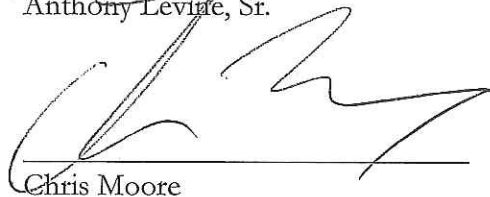
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Matthew Judon



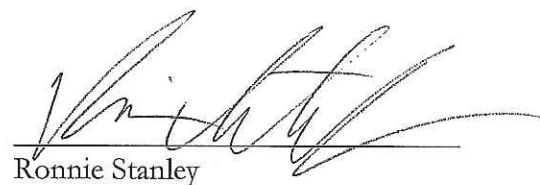
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Anthony Levine, Sr.



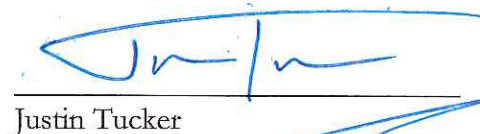
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Chris Moore



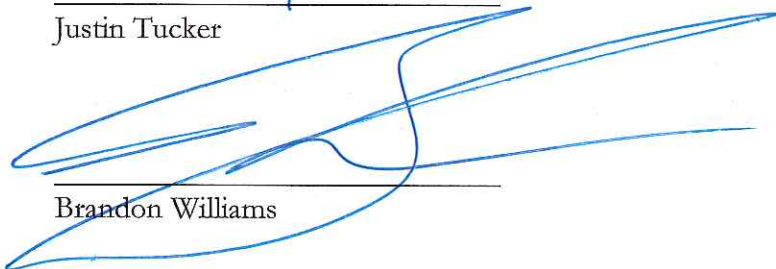
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Ronnie Stanley



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Justin Tucker



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Brandon Williams

CC: Brian Frosh, Attorney General  
Hon. Bill Ferguson, President of the Senate  
Del. Luke H. Clippinger, Chair, House Judiciary Committee  
Del. Kumar P. Barve, Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee  
Members of the House Judiciary Committee  
Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee