



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 367- VEHICLE LAWS- STOP SIGN MONITORING SYSTEMS– AUTHORIZATION

TESTIMONY OF DELEGATE LORIG CHARKOUDIAN

FEBRUARY 16, 2023

Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

Unsignalized intersections are the most common type of intersection in the United States- and Maryland. Nationally, over 6,500 fatalities, almost 1,000 pedestrian fatalities, and nearly 200 bicyclist fatalities occur at unsignalized intersections each year.¹ Even more injury crashes occur at these intersections. In order to make roads safer for all users- preeminently pedestrians and bicyclists- and move closer to Maryland’s Vision Zero goal, we must make these intersections safer.

This bill authorizes local jurisdictions to install stop sign monitoring systems if authorized by local laws and when accompanied with certain provisions. These provisions include:

- establishing that fines for stop sign camera violations shall be income-based with the maximum fines based on the income of the person to whom the car is registered- while also prohibiting additional fees on top of the maximum fines established,
- establishing a process for determining where the cameras will be installed that uses safety related data to determine placement and involves community engagement to determine placement,
- requiring clearly visible signs to notify drivers of the presence of the cameras,
- creating due process protections for stop sign violations, including an effective appeals process,
- requiring local jurisdictions to demonstrate that the implementation of a stop sign camera program will decrease the use of law enforcement officers used for stop sign enforcement,
- prohibiting sharing of traffic camera data with immigration officials, and
- requiring revenues beyond those that cover the cost to administer the program to be invested in pedestrian safety.

¹ *About Intersection Safety*. U.S. Department of Transportation- Federal Highway Administration.
<https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/intersection/about/>

Currently in Maryland, flat fines are imposed for traffic violations. One of the hallmarks of this legislation is the implementation of income-based fines. Income-based fines, also called day fines or sliding scale fines, vary based on the person's financial means and have many benefits for communities and individuals. Sliding scale fines have been used in many countries for over 100 years. When compared to sliding scale fines, data shows that flat fines are criminogenic and trap low-income offenders in a cycle of debt and jail while allowing wealthier offenders to break the law without meaningful financial consequence.² Use of day fines also increases fine collection.³

The use of stop-sign automated enforcement accompanied by income-based fines will make Maryland's roads safer.

Therefore, I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 367.

² Schierenbeck, A. "The Constitutionality of Income-Based Fines." University of Chicago Law Review. <https://lawreview.uchicago.edu/publication/constitutionality-income-based-fines>

³ *Day Fines in Four U.S. Jurisdictions*. U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs. <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/day-fines-four-us-jurisdictions>