



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of HB 470  
Vehicle Laws - Obscured or Modified Registration Plates**

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and honorable members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee: Thank you for considering **HB 470 Vehicle Laws - Obscured or Modified Registration Plates**.

As amended, this bill aims to prevent the obscuring or modification of vehicle registration plates, as well as the sale and deceptive advertising of license plate covers designed for that purpose. Currently, obscuring or modifying a license plate is unlawful only if there is proven intent to avoid identification. This bill provides the simple fix of removing “intent” from that language – because regardless of intent, it is still the responsibility of a motorist to make sure their registration plates are legible. Under this bill, obscuring or modifying a license plate would be a secondary offense.

Obscured license plates have become an increasingly serious problem in Maryland. The MDTA’s tolling vendor reported more than 388,000 obstructed plates in 2022 and more than 380,000 in 2023. In 2023 alone, the MDTA estimated that it had lost approximately \$2 million in additional revenue due to plates being unreadable to tolling systems. Obscured or modified license plates also impede road safety enforcement measures such as red light and speeding cameras, as well as SILVER and AMBER alerts. This bill prioritizes the safety of Maryland motorists and makes it easier for our State and Local law enforcement to do their jobs effectively. MDOT is in full support. I urge a favorable report on HB 470, and ask that the Senate bill be conformed to the House bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Natalie Ziegler'.

Delegate Natalie Ziegler  
Howard & Montgomery Counties, District 9A