

From the Desk of Beth Caro

Written Testimony for:

House Bill 1554

Date: March 10, 2025

Committee: House Ways and Means Committee

Position: Opposed

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary and Members of the Committee,

As a local business organization owner with multiple locations in the State of Maryland, I write to express a strong opposition to House Bill 1554. I am urging an unfavorable vote based on the current economic challenges faced by Maryland's small businesses, particularly my concern on keeping **Maryland Competitive for Businesses** with this Bill.

My company, based in Annapolis with two locations, plays a crucial role in the vehicle titling and registration industry as a MDOT MVA licensee. We employ and train Maryland residents from Anne Arundel and neighboring counties, contributing significantly to the state's revenue through accurate valuation of purchase prices and corresponding taxes.

Our title offices in Maryland operate under tight profit margins, allowing only a nominal service fee for transactions to remain competitive in the market. Any additional fees would risk losing customers to other businesses.

As a growing small business owner entering the second year of sole women business ownership, I operate in an industry already burdened by

regulations and licensing requirements in Maryland's transportation sector, impacting businesses ranging from car washes to auto repair shops.

The proposed bill, House Bill 1554, would substantially escalate business costs onto us business as owners and to our customers, hindering our ability to serve the Maryland public efficiently. This financial burden comes at a time when the small business community is striving to recover from the loss of nearly 40,000 businesses since the bill's last attempt in 2020 and then again this year.

I urge the committee to consider the implications of an unfavorable vote on House Bill 1554, preventing the imposition of additional pass-on state fees or taxes. Please recognize the extensive efforts of small businesses in Maryland, providing training, livable incomes, benefits, and support to employees and their families.

Small businesses in Maryland already contribute significantly to training and education, often offering first jobs to Marylanders and supporting their continued employment. As a title service, we have contributed to the state by millions in excise tax, underscoring the importance of an unfavorable report on House Bill 1554.

In conclusion, I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to hearing everyone's perspectives. Thank you for considering the impact on Maryland's small businesses and the broader community.