

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 470 (Delegates Ziegler and Addison)
Environment and Transportation

Vehicle Laws - Obscured or Modified Registration Plates

This bill alters an existing offense by prohibiting a person from obscuring or modifying a vehicle registration plate *in a manner that may prevent* identification, rather than the current statutory requirement of *an intent to avoid* identification. A violation is subject to the existing penalties discussed below.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Revenues are likely not materially affected. Any changes to enforcement can be handled with existing resources.

Local Effect: The bill does not materially affect local finances or operations. Any changes to enforcement can be handled with existing resources.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: A person may not obscure or modify any vehicle registration plate *with intent to avoid* identification. A violation is a misdemeanor with a maximum \$500 fine. The prepayment penalty is \$280, with one point assessed against the individual's driver's license.

Additional Comments: The Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts) notes that, in fiscal 2024, there were 418 charges issued for obscuring or modifying vehicle plates *with intent to avoid* identification, with 143 guilty dispositions. These figures represent an

increase of 64% in charges issued for obscuring or modifying vehicle plates, and an increase of 61% in guilty dispositions, from fiscal 2023 violations.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years; however, legislation with similar provisions has been proposed. For example, see SB 10 and HB 750 of 2024.

Designated Cross File: SB 322 (Senator Kagan) - Judicial Proceedings.

Information Source(s): Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of State Police; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 24, 2025
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