



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 38

Vehicle Laws - Failure to Pay Video Toll - Reform of Penalties

Environment and Transportation Committee

Submitted by Stacey Jefferson and Margo Quinlan, Co-Chairs

Member Agencies:

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Marylanders Against Poverty

Stacey Jefferson, Chair
P: 410-637-1900 ext 8578
C: 443-813-9231

E: stacey.jefferson@bhsbaltimore.org

Margo Quinlan, Co-Chair
C: 410-236-5488

E: mquinlan@familyleague.org

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) supports HB 38. This bill changes the civil penalty so it will not exceed \$5, reduces the penalty to \$5 for certain outstanding civil citations for video toll violations assessed on or before September 30, 2020, and repeals the requirement that the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA), under certain circumstances, can suspend the registration of a motor vehicle that incurs certain toll violations.

Currently, there is a \$50 civil penalty that is applied to each transaction if it is not paid within a certain time frame. Then, the balance is moved to Maryland's Central Collection Unit (CCU). Once it is moved, there is a 17% fee added to the total amount. There has to be an initial down payment made before monthly payments can start. This system makes it difficult for many low-income drivers to pay their debts.

Cashless toll roads create this problem, because drivers do not have the option to pay the toll during their trip. This can lead to driver accruing extremely high cost very quickly. Drivers can enter into this situation in multiple ways. The drivers EZ Pass responder could stop working and they are unaware that they are accruing video toll fees. They may not have a bank account linked to their account to auto replenish. They may not receive proper notification from MVA of the video toll fees that they owe. These mistakes can lead to low income drivers being trapped into a system of debt.

This bill will also remove MVA's authority to suspend vehicle registrations. This is an important component of this bill because this has a detrimental effect on people's ability to get to work. Disruptions in employment can stem from disruptions in reliable transportation. This can cause low income individuals to experience various negative outcomes.

MAP appreciates your consideration and urges a favorable report for support HB 38.

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) is a coalition of service providers, faith communities, and advocacy organizations advancing statewide public policies and programs necessary to alleviate the burdens faced by Marylanders living in or near poverty, and to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty.