



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 13, 2020

Honorable Chairman, Delegate Kumar P. Barve

Vice Chairman, Delegate Dana Stein

Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

Re: HB-200 -Vehicle Laws - Registration Plate Frames and Borders - Enforcement

House Bill 200 is legislation that would help reduce the opportunity for unintentional discriminatory traffic stops due to a person having driving a vehicle with a license plate frame that can be considered to be obstructing the view of the license plate. The purpose of this bill is to ensure that enforcement is only provided for the secondary offense of a violation involving plate frames or borders with foreign material that are not clearly legible. Currently, the law is not clear on what constitutes an obstruction of the license plate. When drivers are using license plate frames it can cover the expiration date on a license plate or the black maryland text on top of the license plate. Officers in different jurisdictions can view that as a violation of the law and find that it prevents the clear view of the license plate.

It is arguable that this statute allows police to detain just about anyone given the common use of license plate frames in the State. The bill will create clarifying language in the obstruction of the view of a license plate. It also distinguishes the issues around borders of the license plate and still allows law enforcement to use the statute for primary stops when the tag number is clearly obstructed.

Due to the overly vague language of the statue cited to pull people over for having license plate frame or any item obstructing the view of the license plate; it leaves the officer to use his or her discretion, and though it may be unintentional, this has been shown to lead to innate discriminatory tendencies. It is my inclination that the data that the Maryland State Police will present in the coming days will show that communities of color are disproportionately cited or warned for obstructed.

This bill in now way is meant to restrain our law enforcement. I understand that our police officers need all the tools possible to keep the community safe, and they will be allowed to enforce HB200 as a secondary offense, to keep the public roadways safe..

Please join me in supporting our communities and please give a **favorable** report to House Bill 200.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wanika Fisher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'W' and 'F'.

Wanika B. Fisher Esq.
Maryland State Delegate – District 47B