



TESTIMONY FOR HB1178

VEHICLE LAWS – FINES – PILOT PROJECT FOR INCOME-BASED FINES (FAIR FINES ACT OF 2020)

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Stewart

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB1178 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of individuals and grassroots groups with members in every district in the state. We have over 30,000 members across the state.

Our members are very concerned about the impact that excessive fines for small violations of law have in tilting low-income residents towards bankruptcy. Fines are supposed to change behavior, not cause such financial hardship that a person's entire life is upended. They should take into account the income level of the person being fined.

In some cases, individuals who have small violations are living at the edge of poverty and they cannot pay even a small fine. Community service is a great way to have that individual atone for the violation in a manner that is not financially burdensome, but is actually beneficial to the state.

We believe that this change to vehicle laws will be beneficial to keep the party that has violated the law solvent and able to repay the debt in a productive manner.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition supports this bill and we recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in Committee.