

MarcCohen_FAV_SB566

Uploaded by: Cohen, Marc

Position: FAV



110 West Road Suite 500
Towson, MD 21204

**Testimony to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
SB 566 -- Vehicle Laws – Registration Renewal – Inspection Requirement
Position: Favorable**

February 21, 2020

The Honorable Will Smith
Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East, Miller Senate Building
Annapolis, MD 21401
cc: Members, Judicial Proceedings Committee

Dear Chairman Smith, Vice Chair and Committee Members,

I am an automotive dealer with 9 dealership locations and 3 collision centers all located within the State of Maryland.

I have been pushing to get a bill for the past 4 years but have not been successful until someone put in SB 566. The reason is simple. As an automotive dealer in Maryland, I know and appreciate the rigorous Maryland State Inspection that every car I sell or offer for sale on my lot must pass. This ensures that we sell a car safe enough to be on Maryland roads. HOWEVER, as a dealer that services consumer vehicles (more than 75,000 per year) I am amazed by the condition which many of the cars are in. There is nothing to hold consumers accountable for the safety of their vehicle. Many times, windshields are cracked (not just chipped) and the consumer declines the repair, tires are bald and the consumer doesn't want to replace the tires, headlights are not working properly or breaks are worn through and yet there is nothing that requires them to ever bring their car up to any safety standards unless they sell their car. How is a Maryland Safety inspection supposed to mean anything if only people selling the car are held to any kind of standard.

What lead me to push for a bill like this over the years was when I had a consumer at my MINI cooper store. The vehicle had been modified to be lowered by an outside company. When the consumer brought it in, we identified the problem of complain that the tires were rubbing inside the wheel well and in turn the tire was slowly cutting and could blow at any time. The client declined the repair as he refused to address the issue that the car needed to be raised. As he drove off our lot with the car in the same condition, I was not worried about not selling a service. I live in the area. I was worried that my wife and 3 young kjds, who drive that road on a daily basis, are not at risk that this car, a time bomb for the tire to blow, was out and about. Would this bill have addressed this issue, not necessarily, but it had me thinking of all the cars that haven't had tires replaced in 5 years and breaks that are in failing conditions continuing to drive and put people who are maintaining the safety of their cars at risk.





**110 West Road Suite 500
Towson, MD 21204**

We support **SB 566** because it promises to improve vehicle safety and prevent some of the thousands of crashes on state roads each year caused by vehicle defects. By requiring a meaningful review of many of the key safety systems of cars that are more than five years old every two years, the legislation will give drivers an opportunity to fix unsafe brakes, steering systems and other components before they cause someone to get hurt – at the modest cost of \$45 every two years for an inspection.

Marc A. Cohen
Vice President
Priority 1 Automotive Group



Julie Drizin_FAV_SB566

Uploaded by: Drizin, Julie

Position: FAV

SUPPORT – SB566 – VEHICLE LAWS – REGISTRATION RENEWAL – INSPECTION REQUIREMENT

Good afternoon Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and committee members:

Thank you for taking the time to hear my testimony on this very important bill.

My name is Julie Drizin. I am 56 years old. I've been a resident of Silver Spring, Maryland for 25 years, and my two children have gone to Montgomery County Public Schools. This past summer, my daughters almost lost their mother and my husband almost lost his wife.

It was August 11, 2019. I was enjoying a Sunday morning bike ride with my sister when a 2000 Chevy Tahoe careened across two lanes, made an illegal left turn and slammed into me. I never saw it coming. My sister, who was 20 feet in front of me noticed an SUV driving erratically. She heard a crash, turned around didn't see me, then spotted my bike helmet in the grass. Fortunately, it was still on my head, but I was unconscious. My sister screamed for help. A runner passing by stopped and called 911. My sister told me that the SUV driver said, "Oh my God I'm so sorry, my brakes gave out on me. I was meaning to have them checked."

She could have killed me. I remember hearing sirens and getting hoisted onto a stretcher into an ambulance. I was in excruciating pain. I was taken to Suburban Hospital where doctors repaired a life-threatening internal bleed and stitched up a deep 9-inch laceration on my calf. An x-ray showed that I had bilateral pelvic fractures and a broken hip. Because I needed a higher level of medical care, I was transferred the next day to the University of Maryland Medical Center Shock and Trauma Unit in Baltimore. The surgeons there could not operate because the risk of deadly infection was too high. After 10 days in the ICU, I went to a Chevy Chase rehab facility for nearly a month, where I quickly learned how to transfer myself from bed to wheelchair without putting more than a few toes on the floor. I weaned myself off of oxycodone. I figured out how to diaper myself. I had kind and competent caregivers, but the entire experience in a nursing home was horrific – the food, the smells, the fluorescent lighting, the sleeplessness from blaring televisions and patients calling out for help.

When my orthopedist said I could start putting full weight on one leg, I was discharged. But I could not return home because I could not use stairs. So, I rented a one-story Airbnb where I lived alone for about six weeks, wheeling myself around and eventually, using a walker. My husband came once or twice a day to bring and prepare high protein food. My teenage daughter slept over once a week. And physical therapists and visiting nurses came every few days. By the end of October, the orthopedist gave me permission to put full weight on my other leg, and I could finally return home. We had to install extra railings so that I could safely and slowly navigate stairs, and hand-held shower heads so that I could bathe myself.

Still, walking was painful. Sitting was painful. Standing was painful. Lying down was painful. Trying to turn in bed was painful. Sometimes, it still is.

This "accident" disrupted my life. It stole precious time from my family and my work. It traumatized my sister and my children. I had to cancel a beach vacation and four work trips to conferences. I was dependent on other people to drive me to medical appointments and physical

SUPPORT – SB566 – VEHICLE LAWS – REGISTRATION RENEWAL – INSPECTION REQUIREMENT

therapy, to help me get in and out of cars, to do my laundry. So far, I have personally spent over \$12,000 on health care, medical equipment and accommodations.

I know it could have been so much worse. I am alive. I am not paralyzed. I am not addicted to opioids. I have not lost income or my job. CareFirst Blue Cross has paid out about \$70,000 for my medical care. I am back at work and I still go to physical therapy twice a week.

Yet, I am dealing with the ramifications of this incident and probably will for some time. My hip is still broken. I have bumps and dark bruises and scars that hurt to the touch. I can't move my body in ways that used to be easy and natural; and I must be super careful to avoid bumping into things or falling. I can't stand for long periods of time. My ankles get swollen. My hips are different heights, so I have to wear a lift in one shoe. I have been told I will need a hip replacement in a few years. My memory isn't as sharp as it used to be. I have gone from being in the best physical fitness of my life to the worst. I am hypervigilant when driving or walking on sidewalks – fearful of cars around me, anxious when I see cyclists or pedestrians being anything but careful. I drive with one hand on the horn.

And I am angry at the state of Maryland for not protecting me. Perhaps if auto safety inspections required, this 20-year-old SUV's brakes would have been fixed before they failed. If I were hit by a state-owned vehicle, I'm sure you would recognize the state's responsibility for the accident. Even Uber and Lyft require their drivers' cars to pass an annual safety inspection.

You might say required auto safety inspections would be a burden on the poor, who are more likely to be driving older vehicles. But auto safety inspections actually protect the poor – the children whose minimum wage mom is driving them to day care, the under-employed father walking his children to school, the grandmother on a fixed income crossing the street. Safety inspections could prevent a poor driver or a poor pedestrian from becoming permanently disabled or having to declare bankruptcy.

Driving is a privilege, not a right. We required people to pass a driving test to get a driver's license. We do this to make sure they know how to drive safely. But a person's driving skills don't matter much if their two-ton vehicle is unsafe in ways that aren't visible to police.

I did not want to bankrupt the woman who hit me or her family. She was negligent and could have killed me or herself or many others. We were both lucky that didn't happen. But I hold the state of Maryland accountable. I **STRONGLY urge** you to pass this law requiring drivers of older cars to have regular safety inspections, as our wise neighboring states already do.

Thank you,

Julie Drizin, Constituent/Advocate

Franz Schneiderman_FAV_SB566

Uploaded by: Schneiderman, Franz

Position: FAV



Auto Consumer Alliance
13900 Laurel Lakes Avenue, Suite 100
Laurel, MD 20707

Testimony to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
SB 566 -- Vehicle Laws – Registration Renewal – Inspection Requirement
Position: Favorable

February 21, 2020

The Honorable Will Smith
Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East, Miller Senate Building
Annapolis, MD 21401
cc: Members, Judicial Proceedings Committee

Dear Chairman Smith and Committee Members,

I'm a consumer advocate and Executive Director of Consumer Auto, a non-profit group that works with consumer-friendly auto dealers and consumer advocates to advance safety, transparency, and fair treatment for Maryland dealers, drivers and car buyers.

We support **SB 566** because it promises to improve vehicle safety and prevent some of the thousands of crashes on state roads each year caused by vehicle defects. By requiring a meaningful review of many of the key safety systems of cars that are more than five years old every two years, the legislation will give drivers an opportunity to fix unsafe brakes, steering systems and other components before they cause someone to get hurt – at the modest cost of \$45 every two years for an inspection.

With the average age of a car on U.S. roads now at a record 11.8 years, the safety of older cars, in particular, is certainly a serious public safety concern. Experts estimate that about one in four cars on U.S. roads today – or about 63 million cars – carry defects that are serious enough to have prompted a recall but have not been repaired.¹ And millions more cars are driving on worn brakes or other deteriorated systems that pose safety risks to their drivers and others on the road.

The Maryland State Police reports that Maryland had 10,127 car crashes caused by vehicle equipment failure over the last three years (2017-19). That number represents about 3% of the crashes in Maryland in those years. It also represents tens of thousands of Marylanders put at risk by crashes that could have been prevented with more careful attention to vehicle safety.

Many factors affect road safety and crash frequency, of course, and it is difficult to establish a direct correlation between vehicle inspections and crash rates. A 2015 review of the effectiveness of vehicle safety inspections by the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration

¹ <https://wjla.com/features/7-on-your-side/record-number-of-vehicles-on-the-road-with-unrepaired-recalls>



Auto Consumer Alliance
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(NHTSA) did document, however, that the inspections prompt important repairs of many thousands of cars each year in the states that conduct them. NHTSA found that 2 to 7 percent of crashes are caused by car equipment defects. Its study also showed that in 2014 about 529,000 vehicles in Pennsylvania (which requires annual safety inspections) underwent repairs to pass inspection.² Virginia (which also requires an annual inspection) reported repair of more than 1.4 million cars – or about 19% of the vehicles in the state – to pass inspection that same year. Those repairs included about 700,000 cars that failed to pass inspection because of deficient brake components.³

That finding is important because brake problems can, of course, cause serious danger but -- unlike taillight or other failures that an officer might spot on the road and order a driver to repair – would not in the normal course of events be visible to a driver or a patrol officer. Periodic inspections provide an important opportunity to bring such problems to the attention of a qualified mechanic and get them fixed before tragedy strikes.

This is part of the reason that most of our neighboring states already require annual or semi-annual vehicle inspections. That list includes Virginia, West Virginia, New York, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Massachusetts, and the District of Columbia. Indeed in Virginia the governor this year made an effort to rollback that annual inspection requirement – but concerns about the harm to vehicle safety have helped cause that initiative to stall in the Richmond legislature.

The only other state that joins Maryland in requiring inspections only when a car is sold or transferred is Alabama. Bringing a more robust inspection requirement to our state would improve vehicle safety and very likely reduce the number of crashes caused by mechanical defects across Maryland each year.

Consumer Auto supports **HB 566** and urge the committee to give it a **FAVORABLE** report.

Sincerely,

Franz Schneiderman
Consumer Auto

2 <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-15-705.pdf>

3 Ibid.

SenWashington_FAV_SB566

Uploaded by: Senator Washington, Senator Washington

Position: FAV

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Judicial Proceedings Committee

Chair

Joint Committee on Ending
Homelessness

Chair

Joint Committee on Children,
Youth, and Families

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
SB 566 -- Vehicle Laws – Registration Renewal – Inspection Requirement**

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher and Committee Members:

SB566 protects the life and property of both the operator of a vehicle and that of the general public who are impacted by accidents involving vehicle equipment defects. The bill does this by establishing a recurrent safety inspection requirement.

Maryland currently has no continuing vehicle safety inspection law. The current statute requires the inspections of vehicles only during the sale and transfer of that vehicle; and no time after. This bill would require a bi-annual abbreviated vehicle safety inspection as a pre-requisite for re-registration. The inspection would be limited to nine (9) items, as outlined in the bill that we believe are critical to basic vehicle safety.

By establishing this requirement, **SB566** addresses issues regarding vehicle safety and negligence resulting from faulty equipment and aligns Maryland with other states that have already established these inspections. We must take measures to prevent or at least mitigate these results. Regular vehicle inspections provide a path with assisting in the reduction.

All of our neighboring states require vehicle safety inspections as a prerequisite of re-registration - **Delaware, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, and West Virginia**. Other states include Alabama, Texas, Hawaii, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Utah, and Vermont. In fact, **most of these states require an annual inspection**, with the exception of *Rhode Island, Louisiana, and Missouri* which all have bi-annual inspections.

Maryland State Police (MSP) reported that from 2017-2019 roughly 348,600 accidents; of those 10,127 were directly related to vehicle equipment defects. Although that may seem like a small number in comparison to overall accident totals, that number reflects that accidents in which equipment defects were a contributor account for 2.9% of all accidents in our state. These accidents result in deaths, injuries, and property damage – all of which we have an opportunity to help prevent.

Comparatively we discovered the number of crimes resulting in death, injuries and property damage over the past 3 years totaled 166,712, of 6.043 million people, or 2.7%.

Maryland must take measures to prevent or at least mitigate these accidents. Regular vehicle inspections can help with this mitigation and reduce the number of accidents involving vehicle equipment defects. Today, you'll also be hearing testimony from Julie Drizin on the devastating impact that these kinds of accidents have on and why inspections are so important to increasing safety.

Every effort to increase vehicle safety, and preserve both life and property, is an effort in the right direction. For these reasons, I urge your support for SB566.

Thank you for your time and your consideration.

In Partnership,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mary Washington". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Senator Mary Washington

TravisMartz_fav_SB566

Uploaded by: Senator Washington, Senator Washington

Position: FAV



DATE: February 21, 2020

TO: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Peter Kitzmiller (President)
Travis Martz (General Counsel)

RE: SB 566 (Senator Washington)

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Maryland Automobile Dealers Association (MADA) represents over 300 franchised new car and truck dealers, and their 24,000 employees. We strongly support SB 566.

The Maryland State Police has created one of the best used vehicle safety inspection programs in the country, but this is only required when vehicle ownership is transferred. As the average price tag on new vehicles is approaching \$40,000.00, the average lifespan of a used vehicle is at an all-time high – roughly 11.8 years. Therefore, it is a public safety necessity to require additional inspections as our Maryland vehicle fleet ages.

Virginia, Pennsylvania and West Virginia has either an annual or bi-annual inspection. Maryland franchised dealers constantly praise the condition of those states vehicles as opposed to Maryland ones when accepting trade-ins. The reason is the existence of a regular safety inspection. Because of the robust initial state inspection required on used vehicles, used vehicles sold by Maryland dealers tend to be more expensive than our surrounding states. Additional inspections during the lifespan of a vehicle will decrease the dealer work required when they transfer the vehicle again resulting in a used car price decrease.

Maryland dealers consistently comment on how they advise customers about issues that wouldn't pass a basic inspection, and customers decline the work. Maryland needs to strengthen public safety by adding another inspection layer that is not unduly burdensome.

MADA respectfully asks the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to give SB 566 a favorable report.

wmda-car_fwa_sb566

Uploaded by: mccauley, kirk

Position: FWA



WMDA/CAR Service Station
and Automotive Repair Association

Chairman: William C. Smith
Members of Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

RE: SB 566 – Registration Renewal – Inspection Requirements
Position: Favorable with Amendments

A bi-annual safety inspection as a car ages would go a long way in making Maryland highways safer. Safety of our families on the highway is a core value and long overdue.

The Automotive Safety Enforcement Division (ASED) of the Maryland State Police does excellent work with the change of title inspections. A bi-annual inspection will take time to plan out the structure and personnel for a solid program. This cannot be done by October 1, 2020.

- ASED and MVA would have to be at the forefront of planning and stake holders would have to be involved to come up with a plan that is economically feasible to the state, to repair facilities and most of all vehicle owners and Maryland residents.
- Make sure you have enough shops qualified and have certified technicians. Regulation/standards for testing technicians.
- Decide parts to be inspected and cost. Cost would be less than a title inspection and quicker. State would have to recover the cost of the program over time.

This is the ideal bill to send to study work group. Study could be completed with a working plan by 2021 session. WMDA/CAR with members in all counties would like to be part of a comprehensive plan to make Maryland roads safer.

We would like to thank Senator Washington and her staff for presenting this bill and hopefully it will come back to you soon.

Kirk McCauley
WMDA/CAR
KmcCauley@wmda.net

MMTA_Louis_Campion_UNF_SB0566

Uploaded by: Campion, Louis

Position: UNF



Maryland Motor Truck Association

9256 Bendix Road, Suite 203, Columbia, MD 21045

Phone: 410-644-4600 Fax: 410-644-2537



HEARING DATE: February 21, 2020

BILL NO/TITLE: Senate Bill 566: Vehicle Laws – Registration Renewal – Inspection Requirement

COMMITTEE: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

POSITION: **Oppose**

Purpose: Senate Bill 566 would require vehicles 5 years old or more to complete an annual inspection prior to the vehicle's registration renewal.

Background: In Maryland law commercial motor vehicles are subject to significantly greater standards of inspection and repair than passenger cars. Maryland's Preventive Maintenance Program for commercial trucks requires that they be inspected annually or every 25,000 miles, whichever comes first. For a long-haul truck, that inspection can occur 4 to 5 times per year. This is the most stringent standard in the country.

The requirements, standards, and inspector qualifications for commercial truck inspections in Maryland's Preventive Maintenance Program are in a different section of the Transportation Article than the new requirement that would be imposed under SB566. As currently written MMTA believes the passage of SB566 will confuse motor carriers about the requirements and potentially subject them to an additional inspection on top of the many they are already performing. Should the Committee elect to move forward on this legislation, the Association suggests commercial motor vehicles covered under Maryland's Preventive Maintenance Program be exempt from SB 566.

About Maryland Motor Truck Association: Maryland Motor Truck Association is a not-for-profit trade association representing the trucking industry since 1935. In service to its 1,000+ members, MMTA is committed to supporting and advocating for a safe, efficient and profitable trucking industry across all sectors and industry types, regardless of size, domicile or type of operation.

For further information, contact: Louis Campion, (c) 443-623-4223