



POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

BILL: HB 280 - Vehicle Laws - Suspension of Driver's License or Registration - Unpaid Citations or Judgments

POSITION: Support

DATE: February 19, 2020

HB 280 appropriately and proportionally replaces the ability of a court to suspend a person's driver's license for the nonpayment of a traffic citation or judgement with the remedy of a civil judgment. Suspending the driver's license of someone with an unpaid traffic citation or judgment is counterproductive when so many are reliant on their vehicles to get to and from work. This is especially so in most of Maryland where relatively little efficient public transportation options exist. If one's license is suspended then the person must decide between possible arrest for driving on a suspended license or failing to go to work to earn money to support themselves or family and trying to repay the unpaid citation or judgment.

HB 280 instead replaces the driver's license suspension with a civil judgment which can be sought. This is the appropriate mechanism to recoup any unpaid citation or judgment. It is an incarcerable offense to drive on a suspended license. No person should be at risk of losing their liberty due to their inability to pay a traffic citation or judgment. In addition, the cost of incarceration likely far exceeds the value of any unpaid citations or judgments.