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—  
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—  
Executive Nominations Committee  
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**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
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**TESTIMONY OF SENATOR DELORES G. KELLEY  
REGARDING SENATE BILL 429-FOR-HIRE DRIVING AND VEHICLES-  
REQUIREMENTS  
BEFORE THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE  
February 9, 2021**

**Mr. Vice-Chair and Members:**

The Public Service Commission is tasked not only with regulation of electric and gas utility rates, but also has oversight on persons engaged in the public transportation of individual for-hire in vehicles such as cars, vans, limousines and buses.

Senate Bill 429 makes administrative changes to the for-hire driver's and vehicle application process. It eliminates a requirement for Baltimore City taxicab drivers to take an education course, changes the way information is displayed on taxicabs, and removes taxicabs from the exemption of motor vehicles not required

to have seat belts in their vehicle. These provisions support for-hire drivers, for-hire license companies, and ultimately, boost safety for the public as well.

Currently, for-hire drivers must file their application providing two recent photographs in a size that can be attached to the license. The Maryland Public Service Commission worked with the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration so that a Maryland driver does not have to submit or be photographed by the Commission, but can give permission to use their license photo from the MVA. This means the applicant does not have to take time to travel to the Commission offices, which is important, especially during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Commission rules dictate that an individual seeking a Baltimore City taxicab license or renewal of a Baltimore City taxicab license must submit proof of successfully completing an approved Commission course that includes in the curriculum courteous treatment of passengers, geography and map reading for the jurisdiction in which the taxicab service is provided, and tourist information for the jurisdiction the taxicab service provides. Senate Bill 429 eliminates the required course for Baltimore City taxicab drivers. The course is no longer needed and is

outdated due to development of electronic assistance in taxicabs, such as GPS and other navigation systems. The course requirement is only for Baltimore City taxicab drivers. However, with the vast changes in the transportation industry (Uber/Lyft), the current requirement is not fair and creates an added expense not equally required for other transportation services. Under the current rules, this could potentially delay the licensing of drivers since the course may not be offered due to the pandemic.

Senate Bill 429 also reduces the lettering requirement of the taxicab permit holder's information on the vehicle, potentially saving the permit holder money. Senate Bill 429 also expands requirements for the operation of limousines, etc. to include many drivers that operate motor vehicles for-hire in Maryland.

Finally, Senate Bill 429 removes taxicabs from a limited list of motor vehicles not required to have seat belts in their vehicle. The current language is outdated. This important measure will mean the riding public will be able to use seat belts, as intended by the vehicle manufacturer and Maryland laws.

I therefore ask for your support in passing SB 429.