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The Maryland House of Delegates
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Sponsor Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 29

Vehicle Laws - Failure to Pay Video Toll - Penalties

March 3, 2022

House Bill 29 is in the same posture as bills which passed the House of Delegates in 2020 and 2021 thanks to the good work of this committee. Under the bill, suspension of a vehicle registration for video toll debt would no longer be permissible, but flagging for non-renewal would still be allowed.

Maryland is an outlier in allowing the suspension of vehicle registrations for video toll debt which contributes to the criminalization of poverty. A better practice, used successfully in many states, is to simply flag the registration for non-renewal.

In 2020, MDTA created its own perfect storm by deciding to permanently implement statewide cashless tolling not long after switching vendors and pausing the mailing of all video tolls and certain E-ZPass transactions. The resulting dramatic increase in backlogged toll transactions hitting drivers now underscores the importance of fixing this policy.

The sponsor amendment makes the bill an emergency measure and adds language requiring a performance audit, similar to the General Assembly's approach in 2019 to UMMS.

I ask for your favorable report.