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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 30, 2022

House Bill 29 is an emergency bill that would repeal MDTA's ability to refer a motor vehicle registration to the MVA for suspension for video toll debt. Referring to the MVA to flag for nonrenewal would still be allowed. The bill also includes language to require a performance audit of MDTA's electronic toll collection practices including the procurement that contributed to our current state of dysfunction. This is similar to the General Assembly's approach in 2019 to the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS) scandal.

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. As of January 2020, before the pandemic, the tags of 3,983 Marylanders were suspended for toll debt.

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

I ask for your favorable report.

MVA Vehicle Flags

	<i>Data as of January 16, 2020</i>		
A	Vehicles with valid registration		5,192,523
B	Vehicles with unexpired registration non-renewal flags (includes suspensions)		362,735
C	Vehicles with unexpired registration flagged as suspended		
	By Category		Unique across categories
	<i>Due to ICD</i>	<i>19,718</i>	117,178
	<i>Due to VEIP</i>	<i>93,477</i>	
	<i>Due to Tolls violation</i>	<i>3,983</i>	
	Non-renewal Flags		
1	Jurisdiction related flags		715,900
	<i>Parking</i>		127,554
	<i>Red Light</i>		163,068
	<i>Speed Camera</i>		299,507
	<i>School Bus Camera</i>		7,582
	<i>Tolls</i>		118,189
2	VEIP related flags		210,882
3	Insurance Compliance flags		89,388
4	Title related flags		8,715
5	Soundex Flags		195,594
	(i.e. Insurance Compliance, Comptroller etc.)		
6	Other		12,496
	Total Flags		1,232,975