

SB0218 - MVA - Drivers Licenses and Identification

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January 13, 2022

The Honorable William C. Smith Jr.
Chairman, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis MD 21401

***Re: Letter of Support – Senate Bill 218 – Driver’s Licenses and Identification Cards –
Temporary Renewal***

Dear Chairman Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration (MDOT MVA) supports Senate Bill 218, which will create more flexibility for customers handling driver’s license and identification (ID) card renewals in the wake of lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Senate Bill 218 enacts a number of customer service-oriented reforms that allow the MDOT MVA improved flexibility when extraordinary circumstances arise which make it difficult for customers to visit an MDOT MVA branch. Such flexibility would benefit active-duty members of the United States military, their spouses and dependents, students studying outside the State of Maryland, customers who are out of the State for work or personal reasons for an extended period, and those impacted by states of emergency who would otherwise be unable to risk coming into branch offices. These individuals will instead be able to obtain short-term renewals until circumstances change and enable them to renew for a full-term license or ID card at a later date.

The changes to driver licensing and identification card renewals under Senate Bill 218 will improve flexibility in non-emergency times as well. Currently, the MDOT MVA has the authority to extend driver’s licenses and identification cards for a total of 90 days, which under certain circumstances may not be sufficient. Further granting the Administrator approval authority for extensions will increase the deftness with which the MDOT MVA can respond to an ever-changing landscape of daily life and better guarantee a premier customer service experience for its customers. It will also bring the MDOT MVA in line with authority granted in neighboring Virginia.

Finally, the other benefit outside of an emergency situation is added flexibility for the MDOT MVA during peak renewal periods to ensure premier customer service. In the ebb and flow of a driver’s license’s eight-year renewal cycle, there are times where an incredibly high volume of Marylanders must renew in the same month. For example, there are some months where 10 times the number of customers have expiring licenses than other months.

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In enacting these reforms, Maryland has an opportunity to better manage customer flows at predictable levels while better serving state residents during extreme circumstances. Doing so will allow the MDOT MVA branch offices to operate at peak efficiency and ensure premier customer service.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration respectfully requests the Committee grant Senate Bill 218 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

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