



**HB 1029 - Public Safety - Lights On for Maryland Program - Establishment
Environment and Transportation Committee
Favorable**

March 9, 2023

Chair Barve, Vice-Chair Stein and Members of the Committee,

The University of Maryland Police Department (UMPD) launched one of our newest proactive community initiatives, **Lights On!** in February of 2021. This is a community-driven program, which offers repair vouchers instead of traffic tickets for participating law enforcement agencies and communities they serve. The program both increases safety and builds good-will and trust between police and the community.

Officers can provide drivers with Lights On! vouchers redeemable for free repairs of broken lights at our local partner auto shop. Each voucher has a \$250 limit and each voucher has a serial number for accountability purposes. When presenting the voucher to the driver, the officer will also issue a written warning, to ensure that we comply with TR 25-113 (traffic stop data collection). Officers explain the voucher process to the driver so they can get their light fixed promptly. Once received, the vouchers are valid for up to 14 days to maintain traffic safety. This program is a win-win for our community and local citizens in the surrounding area.

LightsOn! is a Minneapolis-based organization formed to reduce fatal traffic stops after the 2016 killing of Philando Castile, who had been pulled over by police nearly 50 times for minor traffic violations. Many members of our community are fearful of being stopped by the police, and while the vast majority of stops proceed without incident, the economic consequence of even a ticket can be devastating to a single head of household. Lights On! allows for a routine traffic stop for students and community members to turn into an opportunity to fix their cars for free or at a discount and also create positive interactions between police and the community.

We have seen the success of the Lights On! Program at UMPD and are supportive of Delegate Solomon's bill to expand this program throughout the State.

Thank you for your consideration and we urge a favorable report on HB 1029.