



Auto Consumer Alliance
13900 Laurel Lakes Avenue, Suite 100
Laurel, MD 20707

**Testimony to the Senate Finance Committee
SB 861 – Consumer Protection --
Scanning or Swiping Identification Cards and Driver’s Licenses – Prohibition
Position: Favorable**

The Honorable Melony Griffith
Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Building
Annapolis, MD 21401
cc: Members, Senate Finance Committee

March 15, 2023

Honorable Chair Griffith and Members of the Committee:

I'm a consumer advocate and Executive Director of Consumer Auto, a nonprofit group that works for safety, transparency, and fair treatment for Maryland drivers and car buyers.

Consumer Auto supports **SB 861** because it will provide important new protections to the privacy of the data stored on driver’s licenses and ID cards. These protections are critical in a world where both identity theft and data breaches, even from what are supposed to be highly sophisticated financial firms, have become only too commonplace.

Identity theft affects millions of consumers each year. And because our driver’s licenses contain all kinds of valuable personal information about us – including our full name, Social Security number, signature, picture, height and weight, address, and date of birth, the practice of routinely checking and scanning our licenses and IDs creates many opportunities for fraudsters to filch our basic identity data. Yet it has become common for consumers to have their doctors, merchants, service providers, even their local pubs insist on seeing and scanning our ID’s or licenses before providing routine services. And a quick search on the web shows that all kinds of companies are eagerly marketing inexpensive scanning devices that tout their ability to store the personal information of thousands of customers.

This practice puts our privacy and basic data security at obvious risk. And while some merchants, medical offices, and other businesses may need to see or scan your license to verify your identity, very few of them need to glean or store more than the most basic information about you.

SB 861 properly restricts the right to collect, store and sell such information to those who need to do so to verify the age or identity of a customer, enforce the law, prevent fraud, and conduct financial transactions. And it rightly classifies a violation of that rule as an unfair, abusive or deceptive trade practice under Maryland law.

We support SB 861 and ask the committee to give it a FAVORABLE report.

Sincerely,
Franz Schneiderman
Consumer Auto