



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

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**Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee**  
**HB 154: Workgroup to Study the Impact of Court-Mandated Fines and Fees**  
**Position: Favorable**

Jan. 25, 2023

The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chair  
House Judiciary Committee  
Room 101, House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
Cc: Members, House Judiciary Committee

**Honorable Chair Clippinger and Members of the Committee:**

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

I support **HB 154** because, as an advocate for vulnerable consumers, I'm very much aware of the serious burden that court-mandated fines and fees impose on many lower-income Marylanders.

Fines and fees for small, non-violent traffic offenses, in particular, raise the cost of driving for many Maryland drivers who are already struggling to manage the high cost of car ownership. And because in some cases Marylanders can have their driver's licenses or vehicle registrations suspended if they can't pay these fees, those charges can cost non-violent but lower-income Maryland offenders their right to drive. Losing that right, of course, can cause them to lose the mobility they need to make a living, access other economic or education opportunities, and meet their families' other needs.

Such fees do tend to criminalize poverty and impose significant burdens on lower-income Marylanders— and do very little, if anything, to advance public safety. That's why I strongly support establishing a workgroup to study their impact and look for ways to reduce or eliminate such fees.

**I support HB 154 and ask that you give it a Favorable report.**

Sincerely,

Franz Schneiderman  
Consumer Auto