

SB277_The Arc Maryland_Support.pdf

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**SB277: Vehicle Laws – Driver's Licenses, Learner's
Instructional Permits, and Identification Cards**

Judicial Proceedings Committee

February 6, 2024

Support

The Arc Maryland is the largest statewide advocacy organization dedicated to protecting and advancing the rights and quality of life of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

We support SB277 because it will expand the pathway whereby certain individuals, with limited financial means, may obtain an identification card without paying a fee.

The law currently states that a fee is not required for applicants who are over the age of 65, legally blind, has a loss of a limb, is physically disabled and reliant on mobility aids, and has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a “major life activity” as defined by the ADA. With this bill, the list of qualifying conditions, for a free ID, would be expanded to other groups, including youth and juveniles who are connected with the department of Juvenile Services, is a participant in a DHS program, or is currently under the care of the Maryland Department of Health. This expanded availability would reach some of our most vulnerable citizens, providing them with the opportunity to obtain identification they may not otherwise be able to afford. Identification is needed for obtaining jobs, travel, access to healthcare, and many other aspects of life. For these reasons, we ask the committee for a favorable report on SB277.

For more information, please contact: Ande Kolp, Executive Director, The Arc Maryland 443-851-9351
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Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

February 6, 2024

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Judicial Proceedings
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Senate Bill 277 – Vehicle Laws Driver’s Licenses, Learner’s Instructional Permits, and Identification Cards – Letter of Support

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of Support for Senate Bill (SB) 277 – Vehicle Laws - Driver’s Licenses, Learner’s Instructional Permits, and Identification Cards.

SB 277 will be crucial to the Maryland Department of Health’s (MDH) Healthcare System’s efforts to provide its patients with identification cards upon discharge. Specifically, this legislation will waive the \$20.00 (twenty-dollar) identification card fee for individuals who present documentation showing that they are currently under the care of MDH.

Operationally, this bill will make it easier for our patients to obtain a community discharge placement where providers require state identification cards and insurance cards. The MDH Healthcare System believes that by waiving the identification card fee, it will be able to provide patients with identification cards at a greater pace, helping to lower the waitlist for admission and provide a timely and uncomplicated discharge process. SB 277 will help to make community discharges a timely process.

The MDH Healthcare System urges a favorable vote on SB 277 – Vehicle Laws – Driver’s Licenses, Learner’s Instructional Permits, and Identification Cards.

I appreciate your consideration of this matter. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs, at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary

SB0277 - MVA – Driver’s Licenses, Learner’s Instru

Uploaded by: Pilar Helm

Position: FAV

February 6, 2024

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

RE: Letter of Support - Senate Bill 277 - Vehicle Laws - Driver's Licenses, Learner's Instructional Permits, and Identification Cards

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports Senate Bill 277 as it improves quality of life for those experiencing unique hardships, assists those serving in public sector jobs requiring time abroad, and improves roadway safety for motorcycle endorsement applicants.

Senate Bill 277 allows the MDOT Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) to issue an Identification (ID) card to certain populations free of charge. It further would expand eligibility of out-of-state renewal options to civilian contractors of the federal government, including civilians working abroad for the military. Finally, it would extend a learner's permit for a non-Graduated Licensing System (GLS) permit from six months to one year.

Providing Maryland residents with a form of identification connects people to life's opportunities. The cost of a regular identification card is \$24 for a new, adult, full-term identification card and \$20 for a duplicate. Sometimes, customers are in difficult situations and struggle to afford this cost. The MVA has worked with many support organizations and agencies over the years to offer a reduction in the fee to \$1 for those in specific situations who are experiencing unique economic hardships. However, the costs incurred by the MVA merely in collecting and accounting for the \$1 fee charged to these customers exceeds the revenue generated by the charge itself, and this isn't even accounting for the costs incurred by the product itself. With low rates of 811 customers in Fiscal Year (FY) 22 and 975 in FY23, the overall proposal should result in net savings for the MVA services provided as a result. With this legislation, the MVA can provide the vital identification product for customers in need while reducing the burdensome administrative costs incurred by the MVA through increased efficiencies.

Additionally, some applicants' licenses or identification cards expire while they are working overseas, including for the armed services. These customers have documentation indicating they are civilians and have been out of the country for purposes related to government contracting work. Many of these customers are working side-by-side with the armed services or the U.S. Department of State. Currently, there are no provision that keeps these customer's licenses in effect for the duration of their work despite their public service on behalf of the country.

The MVA receives approximately 15-20 requests monthly from these types of situations faced by civilian contractors and is unable to assist them with out of state renewal unless they are a uniformed member of the armed services. Extending the ability for the MVA to offer out-of-state renewal processes for these Marylanders who are serving their country overseas in unique roles would update the MVA's services to reflect the modern landscape of the federal workforce. As Maryland is uniquely situated geographically to the federal government and its agencies that focus on overseas work on behalf of American interests, offering this reform is a necessary customer service reform for the MVA to provide for the large population serving in these modern public service roles.

Finally, the MVA is seeking to extend the non-GLS learner's permit. During the 2023 session, at the MVA's request, the legislature extended the term for a commercial learner's permit to one-year, providing commercial drivers a needed update to the timeframe during which they can receive needed safety and skills training along with more behind the wheel training with a licensed driver. Several years ago, the legislature extended the GLS learner's permit to one-year and this proposal would extend the same timeframe to non-GLS learner's permits. It would allow applicants seeking a motorcycle endorsement to have additional behind the wheel time with an experienced driver along with completing additional training if needed. Applicants who are obtaining a Motorcycle Endorsement on their license (which is mainly used seasonally) would then have the needed flexibility to complete a driving test regardless of the season, allowing for more flexibility on when they complete the training course and giving them the needed time behind the handlebars to gain necessary skills for safe operation. Further benefits also would allow out of country applicants to get the proper road time, and in some cases these applicants would be able to have additional time to obtain their out of country licenses through their host country if they were previously licensed.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee grant Senate Bill 277 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine E. Nizer
Administrator
Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration
410-787-7830

Pilar Helm
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090

SB 277 - Vehicle Laws - Driver's Licenses, Learner

Uploaded by: Kam Bridges

Position: FWA

JOTF JOB OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE

Advocating better skills, jobs, and incomes

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 277

Vehicle Laws - Driver's Licenses, Learner's Instructional Permits, and Identification Cards

TO: Hon. William C. Smith, Jr., and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Job Opportunities Task Force

DATE: February 6, 2024

POSITION: Favorable with Amendments

The Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) is an independent, nonprofit organization that develops and advocates policies and programs to increase the skills, job opportunities, and incomes of low-wage workers and job seekers in Maryland. **JOTF supports Senate Bill 277 with amendments, which would waive the fees associated with receiving a state ID under certain circumstances.**

Senate Bill 277 will waive the fee for receiving a state ID if the applicant:

- Presents documentation showing they were released from a correctional facility within the prior 60 days
- Presents documentation showing the applicant is a youth under the care of the Department of Juvenile Services
- Presents documentation showing that the applicant is a youth between 15 and 20 years of age who is a participant in a department of human services program
- Presents documentation showing that the applicant is currently homeless
- Or presents documentation showing that the applicant is currently under the care of the Maryland Department of Health

JOTF supports this legislation because having valid identification is critical for vulnerable populations to gain access to critical social services and employment opportunities. The demographics covered by the provisions of House Bill should not be subjected to the fees associated with applying for an ID; that is simply another financial barrier they are forced to overcome. Waiving the fee will increase access to the necessary documentation for vulnerable populations to improve their situations. However, many homeless individuals do not have access to documentation proving that they are homeless. JOTF would support amendments that allows for alternative methods for an individual to prove their unhoused status besides documentation to ensure this bill directly supports the populations that need it the most.

For these reasons, JOTF supports Senate Bill 277 and urges a favorable report with amendments.

For more information, contact:

Kam Bridges / Senior Public Policy Advocate / Kam@jotf.org