

# BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL



**Councilwoman Danielle McCray**

**Second District**

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CHAIR:

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT, AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

MEMBER:

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

LEGISLATIVE INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE

FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

January 31, 2024

RE: Senate Bill 357 - Baltimore City - Out-of-State Vehicles - Improper Registration

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Respected Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 357 and to urge your favorable vote on this essential piece of legislation. SB357 seeks to grant Baltimore City the authority to tow, remove, or impound vehicles belonging to recent state residents who fail to register their vehicles with the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) and display valid registration plates within a 60-day window.

The significance and impact of this legislation are far-reaching, addressing critical concerns that demand our immediate attention. One primary issue is the widespread use of temporary license plates, often referred to as "ghost tags." These plates are intended for short-term use after a vehicle sale, but lax state regulations have enabled the proliferation of counterfeit temporary tags. Some individuals misuse these illegitimate tags to avoid tolls, evade traffic camera-generated fines, skip out on car insurance and registration fees, and escape identification following criminal activities.

Furthermore, the widespread use of illegal or counterfeit temporary license plates poses a substantial public safety risk, particularly for law enforcement officers conducting routine stops. Vehicles with out-of-state tags can complicate law enforcement efforts, making it challenging to track and identify individuals involved in criminal activities or accidents. Granting Baltimore City the authority to address such situations will significantly enhance law enforcement's effectiveness.

Lastly, the financial impact on Maryland due to lost revenue and taxes from vehicles with out-of-state tags not contributing their fair share to the state's funds cannot be underestimated. Enforcing timely registration is a vital step in maintaining a balanced financial ecosystem.

Our existing laws and regulations concerning vehicle licensing serve a crucial purpose and should be applied consistently to all residents to foster a safer and more accountable community. With your affirmative vote, this bill will not only enhance public safety but also ensure a more efficient and equitable use of resources within our community.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Danielle McCray".

Councilwoman Danielle McCray

Baltimore City Councilwoman - 2<sup>nd</sup> District