

OPPOSE SB0525

I strongly oppose Senate Bill 525, which seeks to establish a pilot program allowing members of the public to submit video evidence of alleged violations of the Illegal Dumping and Litter Control Law and receive monetary rewards for doing so. This bill raises significant concerns regarding the constitutionality of such video surveillance and the potential for abuse.

Lack of Due Process

The bill's provision allowing individuals to submit video evidence without any oversight or accountability raises serious questions about the accused's right to due process. The accused will have no opportunity to defend themselves against the video evidence, which may be misleading, tampered with, or fabricated. This is a clear violation of the fundamental principle of justice, which requires that all parties be given a fair hearing and an opportunity to present their case.

Monetary Rewards and the Risk of Misrepresentation

The bill's provision offering monetary rewards to individuals who submit video evidence that leads to a conviction creates a perverse incentive for individuals to fabricate or misrepresent evidence. This will lead to a culture of snitching and a lack of trust in the justice system. The risk of video forgery and misrepresentation is high, and the consequences of such actions will be severe. This is how Stalin's regime in the old Soviet Union incentivized many unscrupulous citizens to report even law-abiding neighbours with an aim of a personal monetary gain.

Unconstitutionality

The bill's provision allowing individuals to submit video evidence without any oversight or accountability is a clear violation of the accused's right to due process. Furthermore, the bill's provision offering monetary rewards to individuals who submit video evidence that leads to a conviction is a clear attempt to buy justice, which is a fundamental principle of our justice system.

Recommendation

I urge the Maryland General Assembly to reject Senate Bill 525 in its entirety. The bill is a misguided attempt to address the issue of littering and illegal dumping, and it will only serve to create more problems than it solves. I recommend that the General Assembly focus on developing more effective and constitutional solutions to this issue, such as increasing education and awareness campaigns, improving waste management infrastructure, and increasing penalties for those who engage in littering and illegal dumping.

Sincerely,
Mark Meyerovich
Gaithersburg, MD