

CHERYL C. KAGAN  
Legislative District 17  
Montgomery County

---

Vice Chair  
Education, Energy, and  
the Environment Committee

---

Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee  
Joint Committee on Federal Relations



Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street, Suite 2 West  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
301-858-3134 · 410-841-3134  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3134  
Fax 301-858-3665 · 410-841-3665  
Cheryl.Kagan@senate.state.md.us

## THE SENATE OF MARYLAND ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**SB322: Modified License Plates**  
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Tuesday, January 28, 2025 1:00 PM

Defaced license plates can make vehicles nearly undetectable, even to enforcement technology. Although tinted license plate covers were outlawed in 1995 in my very first bill ([Md. Code, Transp. §13-411.1](#)), the problem of illegible plates has escalated. This issue poses significant challenges in:

- Identifying red light violators;
- Effectively utilizing speed cameras;
- Solving hit-and-run accidents;
- Tracking down gas station pump-and-run perpetrators;
- Finding suspects with outstanding warrants;
- Locating missing persons through Amber & Silver Alerts; and
- Charging tolls for those without an E-ZPass.

This issue not only compromises safety but also diverts revenue. The Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) estimates that over \$1.5 million was lost in toll revenue annually from 388,295 obstructed plates in 2022 and 380,491 in 2023.

In 2024, I sponsored [SB10](#) with the intent of instituting penalties for obscuring license plates and implementing a replacement program to address naturally deteriorating license plates.

This year's [SB322](#)-- in consultation with MDTA-- allows law enforcement the discretion to issue warnings or citations, rather than requiring a penalty based on the number of offenses. The license plate replacement program was also removed, as the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) has begun a similar effort. This bill simply prohibits a person from obscuring or modifying a vehicle registration plate in a manner that may prevent identification, whereas current law prohibits such actions only if done with intent to avoid identification.

Twenty-four other states ([AZ](#), [CA](#), [FL](#), [GA](#), [IL](#), [IN](#), [LA](#), [MI](#), [MN](#), [MS](#), [NE](#), [NV](#), [NH](#), [NJ](#), [NY](#), [NC](#), [ND](#), [PA](#), [SC](#), [SD](#), [TX](#), [UT](#), [WA](#), & [WV](#)) have enacted similar legislation.

**I urge a favorable report on SB322.**