

SB0207 - MVA - LOS - Drunk and Drug-Impaired Drivi

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January 14, 2025

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

RE: Letter of Support - Senate Bill 207 - Drunk and Drug-Impaired Driving and Failure to Remain at the Scene - Revocation of Driver's License

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports Senate Bill 207 as a necessary reform to driver's license suspension penalties for the most serious of traffic crash offenders.

Senate Bill 207 requires the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) to revoke the driver's license from any individual convicted or granted a probation before judgment for certain offenses. This includes driving under the influence of alcohol and/or impairment of drugs that contributes to a crash that results in death or life-threatening injury of another person, or failure to remain at the scene of a crash that results in the death or bodily injury of another person. SB 207 would establish a minimum period of five (5) years before a person would be eligible for driver's license reinstatement.

Under current law, there is no distinction of how long an individual's driver's license should be revoked once the requirements are met, regardless of the severity of a vehicle law violation. For example, a driver who has accumulated 12 or more points on that person's driving record over a two-year period will have the same revocation period as a driver whose operating under the influence results in the death or life-threatening injury of another person or who flees the scene of a crash where another person sustains an injury.

A driver's license is a privilege whereby drivers are responsible for demonstrating competency operating a motor vehicle and upholding Maryland vehicle law. When a driver engages in reckless driving, this behavior endangers their passengers and other roadway users. According to the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators, research has shown that suspending driving privileges can be effective in reducing traffic crashes. The suspension for such behavior should therefore reflect the severity of the action. Making this statutory change furthers MDOT's goal of reaching zero deaths on Maryland roadways by establishing more severe consequences for the most reckless driving behavior.

The process for reinstatement of a driver's license under the proposed bill would otherwise remain unchanged. Applicants apply to the MVA for reinstatement of their driving privileges after the revocation period has been completed and the MVA reviews their application on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, the change put forth in the bill better conveys the penalty for willfully

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Page Two

engaging in such dangerous behavior and better positions the MVA to keep dangerous drivers off the State's roadways for a more appropriate time.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee grant Senate Bill 207 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

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