



## House Bill 635

### *Motor Vehicles – Secondary Enforcement and Admissibility of Evidence*

Position: UNF

Date: **February 12, 2025**

To: **Judiciary, Environment  
& Transportation**

On behalf of the Caroline County Commissioners, we wish to express our **strong opposition** for **House Bill 635 –Motor Vehicles—Secondary Enforcement and Admissibility of Evidence**, which would impose significant restrictions on law enforcement's ability to conduct traffic stops and use evidence obtained during such stops in legal proceedings. While we support efforts to ensure fairness in policing, this bill poses substantial risks to public safety and law enforcement effectiveness in our county.

#### Concerns and Negative Impacts on Caroline County:

1. **Reduced Law Enforcement Authority:** HB 635 limits officers' ability to stop vehicles for certain primary offenses, hindering proactive policing. Routine traffic stops often lead to the discovery of more serious violations, such as illegal weapons, drug trafficking, or outstanding warrants. Restricting these stops could allow dangerous individuals to remain on the road undetected.
2. **Increased Public Safety Risks:** The bill's shift to secondary enforcement for certain offenses may encourage noncompliance with traffic laws, including seatbelt usage and vehicle safety requirements. We are concerned that this will lead to an increase in preventable accidents, injuries, and fatalities on our roads.
3. **Admissibility Issues in Court:** By limiting the use of evidence obtained in stops deemed inconsistent with the bill's new provisions, HB 635 could result in the dismissal of cases involving serious criminal activity. This restriction would weaken the ability of our courts to prosecute offenders effectively, putting our residents at greater risk.
4. **Administrative and Legal Burden:** The bill's requirement that officers document all reasons for a stop in every citation or report will increase the administrative workload for our law enforcement personnel. Furthermore, legal challenges arising from the new evidentiary rules may burden the county's judicial system, leading to delays and increased costs.

For these reasons, we urge the Maryland General Assembly to reject HB 635 in its current form. While we support efforts to enhance transparency and accountability in law enforcement, we believe this bill, as written, would undermine public safety and hinder officers' ability to protect the communities they serve.

Sincerely,

J. Travis Breeding, President