



Maryland Municipal League
The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns

TESTIMONY

February 12, 2025

Committee: House Judiciary

Bill: HB 635 - Motor Vehicles - Secondary Enforcement and Admissibility of Evidence

Position: Oppose

Reason for Position:

The Maryland Municipal League (MML) respectfully opposes House Bill 635, which establishes substantial new requirements for law enforcement officers during traffic stops, including prohibiting officers from referring to the Maryland Vehicle Law as the primary reason for pulling over a driver.

Municipalities, more than half of which have their own police departments, view this bill as harmful to crime prevention efforts. Under this bill, an officer could not detain a driver for suspended registration, driving in a bus lane, driving with a broken headlight, or excessive noise, among others. These types of traffic stops are a major way law enforcement catches criminal activity—such as drugs, stolen cars, or illegal weapons—that might otherwise go unnoticed. Limiting police officers' ability to pull over drivers could make it more difficult to address certain safety issues, like impaired driving, reckless driving, or unregistered vehicles, and provide fewer opportunities to stop dangerous behavior before it escalates into accidents or more serious incidents.

Further, local governments rely on fines and fees collected from traffic violations as a source of revenue. A bill that reduces the number of police stops could lead to a decrease in this revenue, putting additional strain on local budgets. And if drivers are no longer incentivized to timely renew their registration, revenue collected from vehicle registration on the state level will also decrease.

For these reasons, the Maryland Municipal League respectfully requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 635. For more information, please contact Angelica Bailey Thupari, Director of Advocacy & Public Affairs, at angelicab@mdmunicipal.org or (443) 756-0071. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

The Maryland Municipal League uses its collective voice to advocate, empower and protect the interests of our 160 local governments members and elevates local leadership, delivers impactful solutions for our communities, and builds an inclusive culture for the 2 million Marylanders we serve.