



CHARLES COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., *President*
Ralph E. Patterson, II, M.A., *Vice President*
Gilbert O. Bowling, III
Thomasina O. Coates, M.S.
Amanda M. Stewart, M.Ed.

Mark Belton
County Administrator

February 12, 2025

Re: Opposition to for House Bill 635 – Motor Vehicles - Secondary Enforcement and Admissibility of Evidence

Dear Chairman Clippinger, Vice Chairwoman Bartlett, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Charles County Board of County Commissioners, I write to express our opposition to House Bill 635, which proposes to prohibit law enforcement officers from stopping drivers for 16 secondary traffic offenses. These offenses include, but are not limited to, operating a vehicle with an unregistered license plate, failing to give a proper signal, or spinning wheels or noisemaking.

After garnering feedback from our County's Sheriff's Office and State's Attorney's Office, we are of the opinion that SB 635 will lead to an increase in crime and create additional public safety concerns for community. Something like driving without headlights is classified in the bill as a secondary offense and cannot be the purpose of a traffic stop, yet such an infraction may lead to a serious collision, which could be avoided with proper law enforcement intervention. As another example, throwing garbage from a vehicle has been complained of in our community by residents who do not want to reside where trash litters our natural spaces, and may cause environmental degradation, yet this bill would prevent law enforcement from initiating a traffic stop for this purpose. This effectively renders our anti-litter laws worthless, which is not in the best interest of our community.

We believe law enforcement officers need the ability to keep us safe and enforce the law. HB 635 will prevent effective policing, leaving our law-abiding residents with no recourse. For these reasons, we urge this committee to issue a UNFAVORABLE report on this legislation. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., written in a cursive style.

Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President
County Commissioners of Charles County

cc: Charles County Delegation