

Testimony in Support of House Bill 635
Motor Vehicles–Secondary Enforcement and Admissibility of Evidence

My name is Anita Lampel. I am a resident of Bethesda in District 16. I am submitting this testimony in support of House Bill 635, Motor Vehicles-Secondary Enforcement and Admissibility of Evidence. I want to thank Senator Sydnor for introducing this.

I am a member of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation and of the Women's Democratic Club. I am submitting testimony on my own behalf today. My personal experience raising my children in a city with a racially diverse and economically deprived community where I ran a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Clinic and also testified in Court on numerous occasions has given me a perspective on what I consider to be "crimes of poverty" and how we can act to improve or worsen the lives of the poor. By a crime of poverty, I mean people who cannot pay the registration for the car or fix a turn-signal because a child has been ill or their rent increased. This bill addresses crimes of poverty like broken windshields and lapsed registration. This bill also addresses "styles" which, while possibly not legal, are not in and of themselves a danger—such as an object dangling from the rear view mirror. White-appearing people with nice cars don't get the same treatment.

Police have a lot to do to investigate and prevent SERIOUS crimes. Reckless driving, driving under the influence, speeding— all these create a risk of accidents, injuries and death. These other areas could just be handled with a photograph of the license plate and a fix-it ticket mailed to the owner requiring only demonstration that the issue had been addressed with no further fine. The police would not need to pull someone over, itself a potential driving hazard and a situation which research shows causes the police officer stress, and WASTE TIME issuing a ticket. In police jurisdictions which have introduced this type of legislation, the result has been improved public safety in part because officers have more time to ticket reckless driving of all sorts. Others have provided you with this irrefutable evidence.

I urge the committee to vote in favor of this bill to improve public safety and eliminate targeting specific groups of drivers.

Thank you,
Anita Lampel