



State of Maryland
Department of State Police
Government Affairs Section
Annapolis Office (410) 260-6100

POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

DATE: March 4, 2026

BILL NUMBER: House Bill 1166 **POSITION:** Letter of Information

BILL TITLE: Motor Vehicles - Dealers - Front Registration Plate Display

REVIEW AND ANALYSIS:

This legislation prohibits a motor vehicle dealer from delivering a motor vehicle without front registration plate mounting hardware or from requiring the buyer or lessee to sign a written statement acknowledging the refusal to install the mounting hardware. It also requires a motor vehicle dealer to report, on a monthly basis, certain information regarding the decline in the installation of front registration plate mounting hardware to the Motor Vehicle Administration.

Current law requires the Motor Vehicle Administration to issue two registration plates. The vehicle must display both plates unless it falls into one of three vehicle classes: Class D (motorcycle), Class F (tractor), or Class G (trailer). Motorcycles and trailers must display the plate on the rear, while a tractor must display the plate on the front.

From a public safety perspective, the additional front plate plays a pivotal role for investigators. Officers and civilian witnesses across the state can easily identify and report vehicles suspected of involvement in criminal activities, missing-person cases, hit-and-run collisions, or other motor vehicle-related investigations. Because Maryland Law requires front and rear plates, officers and witnesses gain a few additional seconds to view the plate as the vehicle approaches, as well as another angle from the rear as it pulls away. This critical time period, with a view of the front plate, gives law enforcement another tool, as vehicles may travel at high speeds on controlled-access highways, and the window to view the rear plate remains minimal. This period could be essential in an investigation that leads to the successful apprehension of a criminal or to the location of a missing or endangered person, as broadcast during an Amber, Silver, or Blue Alert.

Maryland Law Enforcement also utilizes the License Plate Readers (LPR) Program, which includes units at fixed locations and in mobile deployments. The removal of the front license plate requirement will reduce the number of Maryland-registered vehicles that will be scanned. This could lead to Maryland Law Enforcement missing a suspect or a victim's vehicle in a key investigation. The LPR Program statistics indicate that 30-40% of all tags scanned in mobile applications are on front registration plates, so it is imperative that motor vehicle dealers equip all vehicles with front registration plate mounting hardware.

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For these reasons, the Maryland Department of State Police urges the Committee to consider this information as it deliberates on House Bill 1166.