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Health Occupations and
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Joint Committee on Administrative,
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Testimony of Delegate Samuel I. Rosenberg

Before the Economic Matters Committee

In Support of

House Bill 344

Business Regulation – Sale of Motor Fuel – Pricing Signage

Chair Valderrama and Members of the Committee:

Two years ago, I was proud to help pass the Gas Price Clarity Act. The law passed with coalition support from WMDA-CAR, a group of independent owners of service stations and auto repair shops. Unfortunately, both the Comptroller and Attorney General's offices have made it clear that wording within the Gas Price Clarity Act was not precise enough to accomplish our intended goal. This bill, HB 344, fixes that language and allows for a two-year-old law to be enforceable.

The Gas Price Clarity Act was passed with the intention of prohibiting "bait & switch" signage. The bill was filled with pro-consumer language, requiring uniformity in numerals dimensions, requiring signs that are readable by motorists, and stating that if one price is listed on a sign it must be the higher (credit) price. Throughout the bill, words such as "prominently", "clearly", and "visibly" are used repeatedly.

Many gas stations throughout our state, are still using signing tactics to the intentions of our two-year-old law – whether deliberately or in effect. In 2024, [surveys](#) showed that 85% of consumers pay for gas using a credit or debit card. Despite this, the lower cash price is usually featured on the station's primary sign, which is elevated, often illuminated. The higher credit price, the price 85% of consumers pay, is far more likely to be displayed on a sandwich board on the ground, blocked from view by shrubbery, traffic, garbage bins, parked cars, or other station

advertising. Even when the dimensions of the numerals are identical for the two types of signs, this disparity undermines clarity and visibility.

The 2024 law did not address reward clubs, car wash, and other discounts. These “specials” are now often the most prominently advertised prices. HB 344 makes small clarifying revisions to ensure that the intent of the original legislation is met. Let’s close the door on bait-and-switch signage and stop gas stations from misleading Marylanders on the real cost to fill their gas tank.

I urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 344.

February 11th, 2025