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TESTIMONY ON HB#1353- POSITION: FAVORABLE

Homeless Individuals - Fee and Examination Exemptions

TO: Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#1353, Homeless Individuals - Fee and Examination Exemptions

Based on 2025–2026 data, the intersection of government fees, funding cuts, and punitive policies in Maryland is expected to significantly increase the homeless population, with estimates suggesting a **25% surge** in homelessness across the state. The primary drivers are ... local policies that impose costs on unhoused individuals, trapping them in cycles of poverty. ¹

Local governments in Maryland often impose fees, fines, and costs that disproportionately affect unhoused individuals, making it harder to escape homelessness. This includes barriers to increased participation in activities that can help a person move from homelessness. Among these policies are:

- a copy of a vital record issued to a homeless individual
- vehicle registration fees
- altering the period of time after which an unaccompanied homeless youth who holds a learner's instructional permit and is under a certain age may take certain examinations for a provisional driver's license; etc
- Fines for Survival
- Towing Fees

This bill will prohibit the Maryland Department of Health from collecting a fee for a copy of a vital record issued to a homeless individual; establishing that a vehicle owned by a homeless individual is exempt from vehicle registration fees; altering the period of time after which an unaccompanied homeless youth who holds a learner's instructional permit and is under a certain age may take certain examinations for a provisional driver's license; etc.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#1353.

¹ Google AI Search “effects of government fees on homeless population in Maryland”