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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of HB 8
Dangerous Driver Accountability Act of 2026

Testimony by Delegate Vaughn Stewart
February 5, 2026 | Environment and Transportation Committee

Introduction

HB 8 is a targeted, common-sense response to a clear and growing public safety failure: Maryland's current system allows a small number of chronically dangerous drivers to repeatedly violate traffic laws with little or no escalating consequence—until someone is seriously injured or killed.

What the Bill Does

HB 8 establishes a Dangerous Driver Abatement Program, administered by the Motor Vehicle Administration, aimed squarely at repeat reckless driving and excessive speeding offenders.

Under the bill, drivers who demonstrate a pattern of dangerous behavior will be required to complete an administration-approved driver accountability and safety course. Failure to comply triggers penalties. The goal is simple: intervene early, change behavior, and prevent the next tragedy—rather than reacting after the fact.

This is not a blanket punishment. It is a focused, evidence-based intervention for drivers who have already shown, repeatedly, that standard fines do not work.

Why This Matters

Traffic fatalities in Maryland are rising—not falling. Over the past decade, roadway deaths have increased dramatically, growing from 445 fatalities in 2014 to 579 in 2024. These are not abstract numbers. They represent parents, children, coworkers, and neighbors who did not make it home.

And these deaths are not random.

Again and again, investigations show that the most serious crashes are linked to excessive speed, reckless driving, and repeat offenders—drivers who accumulate violations but face no meaningful escalation in consequences.

Other jurisdictions illustrate the danger of this gap. In Washington, D.C., individual drivers have accumulated hundreds of unpaid speeding and traffic citations—sometimes totaling tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars—before meaningful enforcement occurred. In one widely reported case, a driver with Maryland ties amassed more than 400 unpaid citations for excessive speeding and other dangerous behavior before legal action was finally taken.

That is not a failure of individual responsibility alone. It is a systemic failure.

When fines can be ignored indefinitely, they stop functioning as deterrents. When there is no intervention until after catastrophic harm, the system has already failed its core mission: preventing danger.

How HB 8 Fixes the Gap

HB 8 introduces accountability where it is currently missing.

It recognizes that for a small subset of drivers, repeated fines are simply absorbed as a cost of doing business. For those drivers, behavior—not revenue—must be addressed. Mandatory accountability and safety education, backed by enforceable penalties, is a proven tool to change conduct before lives are lost.

The bill also promotes fairness. Reckless driving disproportionately harms communities where people walk, bike, or rely on transit—often children, seniors, and working families. Allowing chronic offenders to continue unchecked externalizes risk onto everyone else.

Why a Favorable Report Is Warranted

Right now, Maryland's system sends the wrong message: if you ignore enough tickets, nothing happens—until it's too late.

HB 8 sends a different message: repeated dangerous driving has consequences, and the state will act before tragedy strikes.

This bill is about prevention, accountability, and public safety. It gives the MVA clear authority, uses targeted interventions rather than blunt punishment, and closes an enforcement gap that has cost lives.

Marylanders deserve roads that are safer—not just in theory, but in practice. HB 8 moves us closer to that goal.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report.

Thank you.