

SB0087 - LOS - MVA - Color ID Photo Removal(CO).pd

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: FAV

March 31, 2026

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Letter of Support – Senate Bill 87 – Motor Vehicle Administration – Identification Cards, Licenses, and Permits – Repeal of Color Photograph Requirement

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports Senate Bill 87 as a beneficial cost-reduction measure by removing a duplicative, legacy product design requirement.

SB 87 removes the legal requirement that the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) print a color photo on the driver's license, identification card, or moped operator's permit. Current Maryland products have three identical photos including a large, high-resolution black and white photo and changeable laser image photo on the front, and the color photo on the back of each card.

In 2016, the State of Maryland identification products were redesigned to meet the highest card design standards, including a black and white photo on the front of the license, permit, or ID. A small color photo was added to the back of the product as a clear visual reference and identity comparison point for law enforcement. This was particularly useful before barcode scanners and mobile verification devices were widely available. However, the security and fraud protection benefits of a color photo are largely diminished with the use of modern embedded security layers. The proposed legislation eliminates this obsolete requirement as law enforcement in the State has come to agree it is no longer necessary for safety nor aligned with national best practices.

Removing the color photo requirement will produce immediate operational and fiscal benefits. Double-sided color printing significantly increases production time, equipment maintenance, and material expenses. Eliminating the back photo reduces printing errors, shortens production time, and lowers overall card issuance costs – efficiencies that directly benefit both Maryland residents and the State budget. Currently, the MVA spends approximately \$200,000 annually on product printing. Roughly 50%, or around \$100,000, of that cost is spent on the color ink cartridges to print the color photo on the back of the product. Eliminating that cost would halve production costs for the MVA each year.

The back color photo provides no modern security advantage. Federal REAL ID standards and American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrator guidelines do not mandate the second

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photo and the standard license for most states include only one visible photo. The front image already fulfills all necessary law-enforcement and identity-verification functions. Removing the redundant back photo allows for the reallocation of resources toward more effective, contemporary anti-counterfeiting measures, improvements to card durability, and future technological enhancements. Reducing unnecessary ink and ribbon usage also contributes to the State's environmental sustainability goals.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the Committee grant Senate Bill 87 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine E. Nizer
Administrator
Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration
410-787-7830

Matthew Mickler
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
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SB 0087_HB 0248_ Motor Vehicle Administration - I

Uploaded by: Trudy Tibbals

Position: UNF

SB 0087/HB 0248: Motor Vehicle Administration - Identification Cards, Licenses, and Permits - Repeal of Color Photograph Requirement: Please **VOTE TO OPPOSE** this bill.

Dear Environment & Transportation Committee:

I respectfully **oppose SB 0087/HB 248**.

Color photographs are a critical security feature of Maryland-issued identification. Repealing the color photograph requirement would weaken the reliability of state IDs at a time when identification security is more important than ever. Law enforcement officers, election officials, financial institutions, and other entities rely on clear, accurate, and easily verifiable identification to confirm identity, prevent fraud and strengthen security measures.

Color photographs provide essential visual detail that black-and-white images simply cannot capture, including skin tone, complexion, hair color, eye color, and other distinguishing characteristics. These details are especially important for preventing identity theft, impersonation, and document fraud. **Removing this requirement would make IDs less effective and potentially easier to misuse or falsify.**

Maryland-issued IDs are widely used beyond driving privileges. They are relied upon for air travel, voting verification, banking, age verification, and access to secure facilities. Weakening ID standards could undermine public confidence in the integrity of these documents and create unnecessary complications for agencies and businesses that depend on them.

In addition, there has been no clear demonstration that repealing the color photograph requirement would result in meaningful cost savings or improved efficiency. Any minimal administrative benefit is outweighed by the increased risk to public safety and identity security.

Rather than lowering identification standards, Maryland should prioritize strengthening ID security and ensuring our credentials remain trustworthy, widely accepted, and resistant to fraud.

For these reasons, I urge you to **vote AGAINST SB 0087/HB 248**.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of my concerns regarding this important public safety, identity theft and identification reliability legislation.

Respectfully,

Trudy Tibbals