



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr., Chair and
Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Darren Popkin, Executive Director, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Samira Jackson, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: April 1, 2026

RE: **HB 1166 - Motor Vehicles - Dealers - Front Registration Plate Display**

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT HB 1166**. This bill appropriately requires vehicle dealers in Maryland to provide and install a front registration plate bracket at the time of sale when a vehicle is required to display two plates. Without a statutory requirement that dealers provide the necessary bracket, compliance with Maryland's two-plate law becomes less likely. Ensuring that vehicles are equipped at the point of sale promotes uniform compliance, eliminates confusion, and prevents situations where a lawful requirement is undermined simply because the proper mounting hardware was not installed.

Maintaining a two-plate registration system remains critical to public safety and effective enforcement. Law enforcement agencies increasingly rely on automated license plate readers and other technology to identify stolen vehicles, vehicles with expired registrations, and vehicles associated with criminal activity. The ability to capture a plate from either direction, whether a vehicle is approaching or moving away from an officer, is essential. A single-plate system would significantly reduce investigative efficiency and limit the functionality of these tools.

A two-plate system is also vital when scanning parked vehicles. If only one plate is displayed, a vehicle may be positioned so that the plate is not visible, requiring an officer to exit their patrol vehicle and physically walk behind each automobile to verify registration information. This is inefficient, time-consuming, and in certain circumstances creates avoidable safety risks.

Further, Maryland's automated tolling infrastructure depends on capturing clear images of both front and rear plates. Rear plates are frequently obstructed, altered, or covered by lawful obstructions such as bike racks. The availability of a front plate provides critical redundancy to ensure accurate vehicle identification and accountability. For these reasons, MCPA and MSA **SUPPORT HB 1166** and urge a **FAVORABLE** report.

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