



ABATE OF MARYLAND, INC.

Dedicated to Freedom of the Road & Responsible Motorcycle Legislation Since 1974

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

From: Ken Eaton, Director, Executive Director, ABATE of Maryland, Inc.

Date: February 17, 2026

Re: SB566 - Vehicle Laws - Historic Motor Vehicles - Minimum Age

Position: **FAVORABLE: SUPPORT**

As an avid motorcyclist, and a “car guy,” this bill interests me as well as many Maryland motorcyclists. Many of us have multiple motorcycles, cars, and other vehicles that fit into the “historic vehicle” category. Personally, I have two that currently meet the “historic motorcycle vehicle” definition. Quite a few people have one or more vehicles that meet it as well. However, due to the decision last year to set an arbitrary date of 1999, many vehicle owners have had to turn in their tags and register their vehicles differently, costing them more money in already challenging financial times. That bill affected approximately 1/3 of the historic registered vehicles in Maryland. That equates to approximately 72,000 Marylanders. There was no grandfathering, no exceptions, and no other recourse. Currently, vehicles are either sitting idle with no tags or had to have been sold to people in other states.

In today’s throw away world, the bill passed last year penalizes those that choose not to dispose of a vehicle just because it is old. They put painstaking hours and dollars into restoration of these vehicles, to keep a legacy of working on, maintaining, and collecting these vehicles. A vehicle that is 25 years old or older can be quite challenging to repair or restore. Parts may be hard to come by methods to repair may be challenging, and the technology of today, sometimes does not work on these vehicles.

Numerous states throughout the country have laws indicating that vehicles 25 years old or older could qualify for historic or antique tags. The surrounding states of Virginia, Delaware, and Pennsylvania are in that category. We should be encouraging young people today to continue to work on older vehicles, keeping them in running condition, and getting a little bit of a break on vehicle registration. In addition, the older generations would also like to keep up that tradition. Oftentimes, it is the fathers & grandfathers that pass on that tradition to their children and grandchildren. In times when young people have so many other things vying for their attention, we really should concentrate on keeping those connections with family and friends that enjoy productive pastimes.

Conclusion: We are asking Maryland to join the many other states in identifying historic vehicles as 25 years old or older, instead of selecting a static date in time.

We urge the committee to issue a **FAVORABLE report on SB 566**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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