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Judicial Proceedings Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 28, 2026

The Maryland State Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.  
2 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: Senate Bill 115 – Motor Vehicles – Automated Speed Enforcement – Improper Registration**

Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

SB115 addresses a growing and dangerous problem involving the improper registration of motor vehicles by Maryland residents in Virginia and the consequential erosion of traffic safety enforcement in Maryland.

Currently, an estimated 111,000 vehicles owned by Maryland residents are registered in Virginia. Between 2023 and 2025 there were 14 fatal and over 7,000 non-fatal crashes in Maryland involving out-of-state plates, primarily Virginia plates. These numbers represent lives lost, families affected, and communities put in danger.

Current enforcement mechanisms are ineffective when drivers intentionally register vehicles out of state to avoid accountability. When vehicles with Maryland plates go through speed cameras at high rates of speed, the citations are sent to the Maryland vehicle owners, and if they don't pay them, the MVA will not permit them to obtain the updated tags at the time of required renewal. So the citations get paid, and Maryland drivers are motivated to drive safely. By contrast, when a vehicle with Virginia plates goes through a speed camera at a high rate of speed, the existing MVA system has no way to track down the owner, so no citation goes out. This means that the 111,000 Maryland drivers with Virginia tags can drive down Maryland's roads and highways with relative impunity, as fast as they want.

In the old days, Maryland officers would personally clock speeding cars and then chase them down or wave them over, but our police departments are badly understaffed these days. In Baltimore County alone, the police department has over 200 vacancies, with several hundred additional officers slated to reach retirement age shortly. Our police departments can't spare the manpower to set up speed traps these days because their officers are needed for more pressing

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crime prevention work. So, drivers in vehicles bearing Virginia tags can rocket along our roads and highways with relative impunity.

This bill would require the Motor Vehicle Administration to enter into an agreement with the state of Virginia to obtain information regarding motor vehicles owned by Maryland residents that are improperly registered in Virginia. It further requires that this information be compiled into a searchable database and then made available to state and local governments for purposes of automated speed enforcement.

Once the database is readily available, state and local authorities will be able to send speeding citations to Maryland drivers with Virginia tags. Under the bill, these citations will impose considerably higher fines than fines routinely sent out to Maryland drivers with Maryland tags. The higher fines will serve two purposes. First, they will cover the extra costs associated with creating and using the new database, and second, they will give a strong financial incentive to Maryland residents registering their vehicles in Virginia to stop violating the law and instead re-registering their cars in Maryland.

SB115 provides a creative and commonsense solution to the problem of Maryland residents registering their vehicles in Virginia. It doesn't create new categories of enforcement; instead, it closes an existing loophole that allows a small but dangerous subset of drivers to inconsequentially repeatedly violate traffic laws. By facilitating communication with Virginia and raising penalties for improper registration, this bill promotes justice, accountability, and safety on Maryland roads.

I appreciate the Committee's consideration of Senate Bill 115 and will be happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.