



TESTIMONY

COMMITTEE: Senate Finance

DATE: January 20, 2026

POSITION: Unfavorable

BILL: SB 55

Motor Vehicles - Police Stops - Secondary Enforcement and Excludable Evidence

The Maryland Municipal League (MML) respectfully **opposes** Senate Bill 55, which changes the protocols for law enforcement during traffic stops by designating a number of minor traffic infractions - including certain equipment violations, expired registrations, improper display of plates, and window tint infractions - as offenses that can only be enforced as secondary actions. This means officers may not stop a motorist solely for these reasons, but may issue citations for them only if a driver is already detained for another violation.

Over half of Maryland's municipalities have local police departments that rely on the ability to enforce these laws to ensure roadway safety and deter more serious criminal activity. Often, traffic stops for minor violations lead to the identification of larger crimes, such as stolen vehicles, drugs, or illegal weapons. Limiting our officers' ability to enforce these violations as primary offenses could make it more difficult to detect such activity or to address issues like unregistered vehicles, nonfunctional headlights, or excessive window tinting that may compromise road safety.

Additionally, local governments depend on fines and fees collected from traffic enforcement to help fund essential services. By reducing the opportunities for enforcement of certain violations, Senate Bill 55 could result in decreased municipal revenues and potentially undermine routine compliance with vehicle registration requirements, affecting revenues at both local and state levels.

For these reasons, and in the interest of maintaining the effectiveness of local law enforcement and ensuring public safety on Maryland's roads, the Maryland Municipal League respectfully requests an **unfavorable** report on Senate Bill 55.

For more information relating to this piece of testimony, please contact:

Angelica Bailey Thupari: Director, Advocacy and Public Policy, angelicab@mdmunicipal.org

MML represents 88 municipal police departments and roughly 4,000 officers.