



**SB577: Vehicle Laws - Towing of Vehicles from Parking Lots – Civil Action for Nonpayment**

**Position: Unfavorable**

February 19, 2026

The Honorable William Smith, Chair  
Judicial Proceedings Committee  
2 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
Cc: Members of the Committee

Chair Smith and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

Economic Action Maryland Fund urges an unfavorable report on SB577, which would expose low-income Marylanders to civil suits over towing and storage fees.

Authorizing a civil action for towing storage fees is unnecessary and unduly burdensome on low-income owners. A company can already pursue payment through existing collections mechanisms. This bill would allow a predatory towing company to seek double damages, attorneys fees, and court costs on top of the towing fee. In effect, SB577 criminalizes poverty by levying extraordinary costs on Maryland drivers who have had their car towed-whether the tow was legal or not.

There is already a process in place regarding towing companies and towed vehicles. There is no need to create a burdensome process that requires a government-issued identification card, a requirement which may pose particular risks and hardships for immigrant car owners in this current moment - it is worth keeping in mind that the owner of the car may not be the driver.

Additionally, the costs of a civil action can range from a few thousand to tens of thousands of dollars and require time away from work for individuals who are paid hourly. That exposes low-income Marylanders to costs that are in stark contrast to the goal of this session of focus on affordability. Allowing treble damages, court costs and attorneys fees is exorbitant; other professionals cannot collect these enhanced damages if their bills are not paid. There is no reason to allow towing and storage companies to seek such excessive damages.

Predatory towing fees is a problem recognized by this committee, which has passed legislation to try and curtail those practices. This bill would increase the number of debt collection cases and make predatory towing more profitable, which is a step in the wrong direction. We urge an unfavorable report on SB577.

Sincerely,  
Jennifer Bevan-Dangel, Deputy Director

*Economic Action (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) champions economic rights and housing justice through advocacy, research, consumer education, and direct service. Our 12,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.*

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