

Sen. Ellis Written Testimony - SB0227 - 1.26.2026

Uploaded by: Arthur Ellis

Position: FAV

ARTHUR ELLIS, CPA
Legislative District 28
Charles County

DEPUTY MAJORITY LEADER

Finance Committee

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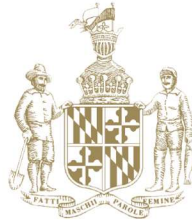
Joint Committee on the
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Senate Chair

Joint Committee on
Workers' Compensation Benefit and
Insurance Oversight

Senate Chair, Charles County Delegation

Chair, Select Committee Southern
Maryland



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 301
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3616
800-492-7122 Ext. 3616
Arthur.Ellis@senate.maryland.gov

District Office
3261 Old Washington Road
Waldorf, Maryland 20602

January 26, 2026

Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Primary Sponsor Written Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 0227, Motor Vehicles – Parking – Disabled Veteran Special Registration Plates

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

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 0227, Motor Vehicles – Parking – Disabled Veteran Special Registration Plates. This legislation is a modest but meaningful step toward honoring Maryland's disabled veterans by establishing uniform statewide public parking standards. Disabled veterans have made extraordinary sacrifices in service to our nation. Many disabled veterans live with permanent injuries or disabilities that affect their mobility, health, and financial stability.

Senate Bill 0227 prohibits state agencies from requiring disabled veterans to pay parking fees when their vehicles display disabled veteran special registration plates. Specifically, the bill prohibits state agency-owned and state-controlled parking facilities from charging parking fees for vehicles displaying disabled veteran plates. This legislation is grounded in principles of honor, accessibility, and service. Moreover, the bill aligns with broader state objectives to 1) promote accessibility for individuals with disabilities; and 2) demonstrate tangible recognition of military service and sacrifice.

For these reasons, I request a favorable report on Senate Bill 0227. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Arthur Ellis".

Arthur Ellis, CPA

Maryland Catholic Conference_FAV_SB227.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Diane Arias

Position: FAV



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

January 28, 2026

Senate Bill 227

**Motor Vehicles – Parking – Disabled Veteran Special Registration Plates
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 227 prohibits a political subdivision from adopting or enforcing an ordinance, a regulation, or a policy that requires payment of a fee for parking a motor vehicle in an on-street parking space served by a meter if the vehicle has disabled veteran special registration plates; and prohibiting a State agency from adopting or enforcing a regulation or a policy that requires payment of a fee for parking a motor vehicle in a parking lot owned or controlled by the agency if the vehicle has disabled veteran special registration plates.

This legislation upholds the dignity of disabled veterans by ensuring their freedom of transportation and reducing unnecessary financial burdens. Disabled veterans have sacrificed significantly in service to our nation; relieving them of avoidable parking fees is a minimal cost for public authorities compared with the benefit of honoring that service and maintaining equitable access to mobility.

Many states already recognize the importance of reducing mobility-related costs for disabled veterans. For example, South Carolina exempts disabled veterans and Purple Heart recipients from municipal parking meter fees when their vehicle displays appropriate plates.¹ Similarly, Texas law allows vehicles displaying disabled veteran plates to park in designated accessible spaces and exempts them from certain parking fees when operated by or for transport of the veteran.² In Florida, disabled veterans with qualifying plates are not charged fees for public street parking or metered spaces, and publicly owned or operated airports may not charge parking fees for vehicles displaying specified disabled veteran plates.

¹ https://law.justia.com/codes/south-carolina/title-56/chapter-5/section-56-5-2585/?utm_source

² https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex._transp._code_section_681.008?utm_source

Eliminating parking fees for disabled veterans not only aligns with these existing policy precedents, it also meaningfully preserves their access to transportation.³ The cost of towing a vehicle or paying repeated metered fees can disproportionately restrict mobility and access to essential services, particularly when public transportation or rideshares may not accommodate specially adapted vehicles that disabled veterans often require.

By codifying a fee exemption or prohibition on towing in law, this legislation affirms the principle that disabled veterans should not face additional barriers—or penalties—for the very mobility they earned through service. This approach both respects their dignity and ensures that local jurisdictions can support equitable access to transportation without undue hardship.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report on **SB 227**.

Thank you for your consideration.

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SB0227 - LOI - MVA - Parking – Disabled Veteran Sp

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: INFO

January 28, 2026

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 227 – Motor Vehicles – Parking – Disabled Veteran Special Registration Plates

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) takes no position on Senate Bill 227 but offers the following information for the Committee’s consideration.

SB 227 prohibits a State agency from adopting or enforcing a regulation or a policy that requires payment of a fee for parking a motor vehicle in a parking lot owned or controlled by the agency if the motor vehicle has disabled veteran special registration plates issued by the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA). The bill creates a similar prohibition for a political subdivision of the State with regard to on-street parking served by a parking meter.

MDOT shares in the sponsor’s commitment to uplifting and promoting veterans in our State, as well as the commitment to the community of disabled veterans. In its individual capacity, MDOT, through the MVA, issues special registration plates for qualifying disabled veterans and designates veteran status on driver’s licenses and identification cards issued by the Administration. Further, MVA works with the Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families Benefits Program to co-locate Veteran’s Benefits Offices at several MVA branch locations throughout the State, offering a one-stop-shop for those who need State resources offered through MVA to support federal veteran’s benefit requests. The department is also proud to partner with the Maryland Veterans Trust Fund to collect donations for veterans and their families who are facing financial hardship; MVA customers may make a donation when they renew their registration online, at an MVA self-service business kiosk, or during a scheduled appointment.

The MVA is responsible for reviewing applications for – and issuing disabled veteran registration plates to – qualified applicants. Presently, the MVA has three types of disabled veterans plates it issues. The first two plate types are authorized under Transportation Article (TR) § 13-619.4 and are issued only to those receiving a designation of 50%-100% disabled per the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Those that are 100% disabled or otherwise qualify for access to disabled parking spaces under TR § 13-616 receive one set of plates that have the universal symbol of access granting authority to use disabled parking spaces when the individual is present, while the rest do not have this symbol. Otherwise, these two plate types are the same in that the alpha-numeric code stamped on the plates contain the letters “DV” on them in addition to saying “Disabled Veteran” at the bottom of the plate.

The Honorable William C. Smith Jr.
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Additionally, the organization “Disabled American Veterans” (DAV) has an organizational plate authorized under TR § 13-619 with the same design along the bottom of the plate as those issued to members officially designated disabled under the required rating by the VA. The only difference in appearance between the DAV organizational plate and the disabled veteran plate is the DAV plates contain “SC” in the alpha-numeric code instead of “DV.” SB 227 as written does not designate which plate, if any, should qualify or not qualify under the bill. As a private organization, DAV chooses who qualifies to be a member. According to its website, a member is “any service member who was not dishonorably discharged and sustained an injury or illness during their time in the military—whether service connected by the VA or not—or anyone who aggravated a previous injury during his or her time in service, is eligible for DAV membership so long as they served during a period of armed conflict (does not have to be direct combat).”

At the Port of Baltimore, Cruise Maryland has offered year-round cruising since 2009 and is currently served by Royal Caribbean and Carnival Cruise Lines. Last year, the Cruise Maryland terminal saw more than 444,000 passenger movements from Baltimore. The Maryland Port Administration (MPA) operates the cruise facility, including on-site parking for cruise passengers and collection of associated parking fees. As set forth in the MPA’s tariff on file with the Federal Maritime Commission, the MPA collects parking fees on all cruise passenger-related vehicles parking at the Cruise Maryland terminal amounting to approximately 800 vehicle interactions each week. Additional training and coordination with staff will be required to ensure identification of the appropriate disabled veteran registration plates and ensure that the provisions of the bill are enforced.

Similarly to MPA, the Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA) operates on-site parking for those who utilize the Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI Marshall) and the BWI Marshall Amtrak station. Currently, hourly, daily, express, and long term parking are available to suit the needs of the travelling public and those visiting BWI Marshall. Parking at BWI Marshall utilizes several automated systems to track space availability and for payment. MAA would need to modify these systems to account for vehicles with appropriate disabled veteran registration plates to accurately discount the parking services provided. Alternatively, MAA would need to retain staff to assist with reviewing parking tickets and registration plate and making the appropriate adjustment to payment.

Beyond the direct operational effects of SB 227 on parking at MAA, it is important to note that the revenue from parking at the airport is pledged to support bonds issued for construction of parking facilities and flows to the bondholders. A diversion of any portion of this revenue may impact the State’s position with bondholders and rating agencies. Additionally, MAA is evaluating the effect of this bill on grant assurances related to airport revenues under the Federal Aviation Administration’s Airport Improvement Program.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the committee consider this information during its deliberation of Senate Bill 227.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Mickler
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090