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WRITTEN TESTIMONY REGARDING HOUSE BILL 081 (UNFAVORABLE)

Madam Chair, Madam Vice Chair, members of the Judiciary Committee, I'm submitting written testimony against House Bill 081, which would make many primary enforcement traffic violations secondary enforcement traffic violations. That would severely limit the ability for law enforcement to enforce the rules of the road and would have the effect of making the roads in Maryland unsafe.

Imagine driving down a road near your home and you see a car that has only 1 lit headlight, and only a rear license plate that is not illuminated so that you cannot read the plate. And even if you could see the license plate, it would not matter because the registration was expired, or the license plate was for another vehicle. You also cannot see the driver of the vehicle because the tinting on the vehicle is too dark. The driver of that vehicle cannot see you because the vehicle has no mirrors. Furthermore, the driver of the vehicle is changing lanes without using a turn signal while tossing trash out of the window. Under this bill, a police officer would not be justified in stopping such a vehicle.

Under House Bill 081, all these traffic violations would be made *secondary offenses*, meaning a police officer could not stop a motor vehicle for these traffic violations. This bill throws out common sense like that driver tossing trash out his car window in another ill-advised attempt to handcuff law enforcement's ability to enforce the law. We all can agree that it is not a good idea to let motor vehicles operate on our roads without the proper safety equipment. And is it really bad public policy to allow a police

officer to stop a vehicle because it has a busted taillight even if that stop leads to the discovery of serious criminal behavior?

Witness how that worked in Baltimore City when former Baltimore City State's Attorney Marilyn Moseby announced that her office would not enforce "minor" criminal offenses. Not only did those "minor" criminal offenses go unpunished but major, violent crimes significantly increased. There is a direct correlation to an increase in serious crime when we limit the ability of the brave men and women sworn to protect us to enforce or pursue less serious crimes.

Speed and red-light cameras cannot replace the work of law enforcement. There are too many citizens that lose their lives on the roads in Maryland every year. This bill could lead to an increase in motor vehicle fatalities. I urge an unfavorable report for House Bill 081 as this bill will reduce public safety and make our roads less safe.

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