

Please enter this into the record for the STEP Act testimony. This version contains links that my in-person testimony could not convey last night.

Good evening Councilmembers. My name is Jonathan Aghion.

Can any of you determine the ethnicity of the driver behind [this window](#)? ----- Neither can the police. Suggesting enforcement is biased, ignores the practical realities police face.

In a time of rising crime, [fraudulent license plates](#), fatal car accidents, and [auto thefts](#), now is not the time to curtail enforcement of vehicular laws.

I wholeheartedly believe in enforcing laws fairly and impartially.

Kemp Mill was one of four neighborhoods across the County disproportionately targeted by car thieves. MCPD offered free GPS trackers and residents took advantage of the program. According to police, thieves would typically arrive in another stolen vehicle and could be using fraudulent license plates that could be printed at home.

In January, I received a ticket from the City of Baltimore. I was not in Baltimore, nor have I ever owned the vehicle in question, but somehow it had my license plate numbers.

A couple years ago, my next door neighbor's vehicle was stolen (MCPD P200047096). Zombie EZ Pass bills which kept growing tipped my neighbors off to the fact the car was still on the road, and using toll roads on their dime. Police located the car nearly a year later in Baltimore with a fake temporary license plate. License plate scanners and automated traffic enforcement cameras—the same ones this body authorized over a decade ago--could have helped spot the stolen vehicle, but they are useless with the rash of fraudulent plates.

Vehicles with expired tags are more likely to lack insurance, or have a driver with a suspended license. A [video](#) I submitted to this council shows an altercation I witnessed in December 2021 where a belligerent customer beat up a gas station owner merely for being asked to leave the premises after the customer made a racial slur toward an elderly Asian customer. In the ensuing battle, the customer ran to his car to grab a small handbag. He reached in and held an object inside his bag. He threatened to end the fight as he pointed the bag at the owner. I and other witnesses pleaded with MCPD to search the customer's car for a weapon, but they declined. The customer's 1990-era beat up Honda Accord had a paper Texas dealer license plate. Searching his name on Maryland Case Search turned up a lengthy criminal record and many open cases.

Unregistered cars are not beholden to biannual emission inspections. California has recently cracked down on cars with faulty emission controls and altered exhausts. Those cars pose a health and environmental hazard by spewing particulate matter, noxious chemicals, unburned gasoline and other pollutants that, according to an MIT Study, contribute to 53,000 premature deaths in the US annually (far more than traffic deaths).

I witness cars with highly suspect temporary tags (or missing tags altogether) on a daily basis while driving to Suitland, MD. The lawlessness is on full display and [ATV riders run red lights](#) and drive recklessly through the streets of DC. Some might call it car culture but even the

Washington Post has noted the lack of enforcement is upsetting residents. I've also seen a license plate purportedly issued by the "Sovereign Citizens of Moorish Nobility."

Some new immigrants--particularly those with a language barrier--could be conned by scam artists into using fake temp tags without knowing they are illegal. That's why **enforcing the State's automotive laws should go hand in hand with a bi-lingual public awareness campaign.**

[On February 17th](#), MCPD pulled over a vehicle with expired registration and through a consensual search, located a stolen assault rifle. Had The STEP Act been enforce, police would NOT have had the authority to pull over the vehicle OR conduct a consensual search. The stolen assault rifle would still be in the hands of a felon.

Governor Moore told me in a brief conversation about the STEP Act that the bill takes idealism too far and could have unintended consequences.

Please join me in opposing the STEP Act.

Jonathan Aghion