



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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**Expedited Bill 14-26 Motor Vehicle Towing-Redemption of Vehicle-Proof of Ownership or Control
(The Vehicle Recovery Act)
SUPPORT**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)**. WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials. For more than 70 years, WDC has advocated for law and policy to improve the lives of women and their families.

We are writing to express our strong support for **Bill 14-26, Motor Vehicle Towing-Redemption of Vehicle-Proof of Ownership or Control (The Vehicle Recovery Act)**. The purpose of this bill is to help the families of individuals who have been detained while in their vehicles by agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). [Those vehicles are often left where the ICE officers arrested the person and are then towed.](#) The family of the detained individual must then attempt to redeem the vehicle without the owner's presence.

Immigrants comprise over 30 percent of our county residents. The fear and anxiety in their lives in the face of an immigration detention system that traumatizes and dehumanizes them is of utmost concern to the members of the WDC. Under current law, when an individual is detained while in their vehicle—whether this occurs on a public street or a private parking lot—towing companies are unable to legally release the vehicle to the family. [Meanwhile, high storage fees often accrue and families struggle to pay.](#)

Bill 14-26 will lessen the stress on the families of detained individuals by requiring towing companies to accept alternative documentation of ownership or lawful possession. Ownership or lawful possession could be established:

- A photo identification issued by the United States, state government, or a foreign government, or a valid nonprofit registered in Maryland, and
- At least one document establishing shared residence or a familial relationship such as a utility bill, deed mortgage statement, lease agreement, birth certificate or a marriage license.

Additional provisions of **Bill 14-26** would:

- Allow an authorized agent to redeem the vehicle with a notarized letter from the owner or documentation from an insurance company, lienholder, or rental car company;
- Require towing companies to obtain signed indemnification and hold harmless agreements when releasing vehicles to non-owners; and
- Prohibit fraudulent documentation in connection with vehicle redemption.

WDC applauds the County Council and County Executive Elrich for trying to make the lives of our Montgomery County immigrant residents—our family, friends and neighbors—less burdensome when a beloved family member is detained.

We strongly support Bill 14-26 and urge its swift passage.

Cynthia Rubenstein
WDC President

Alison O'Brien
WDC Immigration Subcommittee

Kate Stein
WDC Advocacy Chair