

Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Impact Statement

Office of Legislative Oversight

EXPEDITED BILL 14-26: MOTOR VEHICLE TOWING - REDEMPTION OF VEHICLE - PROOF OF OWNERSHIP OR CONTROL (THE VEHICLE RECOVERY ACT)

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates Expedited Bill 14-26 would have a positive impact on racial equity and social justice (RESJ) in the County. Amid the current immigration enforcement environment, expanding the documentation that is accepted to retrieve a towed vehicle on behalf of a family or household member would disproportionately benefit Black and Latinx community members who are being targeted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). OLO also recognizes Bill 14-26 as an equitable policy proposal since it centers the needs of community members who are being targeted by immigration enforcement, who are disproportionately Black and Latinx.

PURPOSE OF RESJ IMPACT STATEMENTS

RESJ impact statements (RESJIS) evaluate the anticipated impact of legislation on racial equity and social justice in the County. RESJ is a **process** that focuses on centering the needs, leadership, and power of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) and communities with low incomes. RESJ is also a **goal** of eliminating racial and social inequities. Applying a RESJ lens is essential to achieve RESJ.¹ This involves seeing, thinking, and working differently to address the racial and social inequities that cause racial and social disparities.²

PURPOSE OF EXPEDITED BILL 14-26

Currently, to recover an impounded vehicle in the County, the following documentation is acceptable as proof of ownership or control under Executive regulations:³

- If the owner of the vehicle is present, a U.S. or state government issued photo ID or consular registration card from any country approved in accordance with County law **and** a current or temporary registration card issued to the license plate on the vehicle;
- If the owner of the vehicle is not present, a notarized letter from the owner authorizing another individual to take custody of the vehicle; or
- Letters or faxes from insurance companies, lien holders, and rental car companies.

Due to an increase in detentions in the County by ICE, vehicles of detained individuals have been left behind in public rights-of-way, which are then towed. This has led to difficulties in family members who are not listed on the vehicle's title to retrieve an impounded vehicle.⁴

Expedited Bill 14-26 aims to create a lawful mechanism for family or household members to recover the vehicle of a detained individual while maintaining appropriate safeguards. If enacted, Expedited Bill 14-26 would:⁵

- Codify Executive regulations for acceptable documentation as proof of ownership or control of a vehicle into County Code (detailed above);

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- In circumstances where a notarized letter is not provided, allow a family or household member of the vehicle's owner to redeem a vehicle by presenting appropriate identification issued by U.S., state, or foreign government or a valid nonprofit organization **and** one document demonstrating shared residence or familial relationship such as a utility bill, deed, mortgage statement, lease agreement, marriage certification, or birth certificate;
- Require towing companies to obtain a signed indemnification and hold harmless agreement when releasing a vehicle to a non-owner; and
- Prohibit false representations or fraudulent documentation in connection with a vehicle redemption.

The Bill would sunset four years after its effective date.

The Council introduced Expedited Bill 14-26 on March 3, 2026.

This RESJIS builds on the ones for:

- Expedited Bill 26-24, Police - U visa Law Enforcement Certification Policy, published in December 2024;⁶
- Expedited Bill 35-25, County Administration - Immigrant Protection, published in January 2026;⁷ and
- Bill 3-26, Administration – Immigration Enforcement Guidance – Required, published in March 2026.⁸

Please refer to the RESJIS for Bills 26-24 and 3-26 for background on undocumented community members, U.S. immigration and racial equity.

ANTICIPATED RESJ IMPACTS

To consider the anticipated impact of Bill 14-26 on RESJ in the County, OLO recommends the consideration of two related questions:

- Who would primarily benefit or be burdened by this bill?
- What racial and social inequities could passage of this bill weaken or strengthen?

All community members, regardless of race or ethnicity, could benefit from expanding the documentation that is accepted to retrieve a towed vehicle on behalf of a family or household member. Amid the current immigration enforcement environment, it may be impossible to obtain the documents that are currently required to retrieve a vehicle on behalf of a family or household member who has been detained by ICE. Thus, expanding the acceptable documentation could especially benefit community members who are being targeted by immigration enforcement. As noted in prior RESJISs, Black and Latinx communities have been targeted by ICE with indiscriminate and violent immigration enforcement.^{9,10}

Therefore, OLO anticipates Bill 14-26 would have a positive impact on RESJ in the County. OLO also recognizes Bill 14-26 as an equitable policy proposal since it centers the needs of community members who are being targeted by immigration enforcement, who are disproportionately Black and Latinx.

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RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

The County's RESJ Act requires OLO to consider whether to recommend amendments to bills that could reduce racial and social inequities and advance RESJ.¹¹ OLO anticipates Expedited Bill 14-26 would have a positive impact on RESJ in the County. As such, OLO does not offer recommended amendments.

CAVEATS

Two caveats to this RESJIS should be noted. First, predicting the impact of bills on RESJ is challenging due to data limitations, uncertainty, and other factors. Second, this RESJIS is intended to inform the Council's decision-making process rather than determine it. Thus, any conclusion made in this statement does not represent OLO's endorsement of, or objection to, the bill under consideration.

¹ Definition of racial equity and social justice adopted from M. Gamblin et al., ["Applying Racial Equity to U.S. Federal Nutrition Programs,"](#) Bread for the World and [Racial Equity Tools](#).

² Ibid.

³ [COMCOR 30C.00.02 Executive Towing Rules and Regulations](#), Montgomery County Code.

⁴ [Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 14-25](#), Montgomery County Council, Introduced March 3, 2026, pg. 1.

⁵ Ibid, pg. 3.

⁶ [RESJIS for Expedited Bill 26-24](#), Office of Legislative Oversight, December 17, 2024.

⁷ [RESJIS for Expedited Bill 35-25](#), Office of Legislative Oversight, January 12, 2026.

⁸ [RESJIS for Bill 3-26](#), Office of Legislative Oversight, March 2, 2026.

⁹ M. Hellmann, ["It's like they're hunting': US citizens and legal residents report increase in racial profiling by ICE,"](#) The Guardian, January 22, 2026.

¹⁰ N. Foy, ["We Found That More Than 170 U.S. Citizens Have Been Held by Immigration Agents. They've Been Kicked, Dragged and Detained for Days,"](#) ProPublica, October 16, 2025.

¹¹ [Bill 27-19, Administration – Human Rights – Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice – Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee – Established](#), Montgomery County Council.