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February 10, 2021

TO: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Hannibal G. Williams II Kemerer
Chief Counsel for Legislative Affairs, The Office of the Attorney General

RE: SB0373 Vehicle Laws – Suspension of Driver's License or Vehicle Registration –
Unpaid Judgments (OPPOSE)

The Office of Attorney General urges this Committee to unfavorably report Senate Bill 373. During the 2020 session, the Attorney General championed, and the General Assembly unanimously passed (SB 234/HB 280), legislation to eliminate the Motor Vehicle Administration's ability to suspend driver's licenses for failing to pay fines, fees, or judgments. The Governor elected not to veto the bills and they became law effective October 1, 2020.

In the wake of that 2020 legislation, more than 89,000 Marylanders have had their licenses reinstated.¹ We are currently in the midst of the COVID-19 global pandemic and millions of Americans have lost their jobs. It would be anathema to good public policy to now, in the midst of this health and economic crisis, overturn the reform enacted by the General Assembly last year and go back to permitting the insurance companies of judgment creditors to cause debtor's driver's licenses to be suspended.

For the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Attorney General urges an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 373.

cc: Senator Edward R. Reilly and Members Judicial Proceedings Committee

¹ See E-mail from Patrick Strauch, Project Manager, Md. Dep't of Transp., to Damon Bell, Counsel, Md. Dep't of Transp., (Dec. 14, 2020, 03:35 PM EST) (on file with author).