

**House Bill No. 62—Financial Responsibility in Motor Vehicle Laws**

AN ACT to repeal and re-enact, with amendments, Section 118 (b) of Article 66½ of the Annotated Code of Maryland (1957 Edition), title "Motor Vehicles", subtitle "Motor Vehicle Financial Responsibility", and to add new Section 124A to said Article and sub-title of said Code, said new Section to follow immediately after Section 124 thereof, relating to the length of time proof of financial responsibility must be retained after said proof has been required by law.

April 4, 1958.

Honorable John C. Luber  
Speaker of the House of Delegates  
State House  
Annapolis, Maryland

Dear Mr. Speaker:

In 1954, I approved legislation under which evidence of continuing financial responsibility is permanently required of automobile operators as a condition precedent to restoration and continuance of their operating privileges in the following situations:

(a) The license has been revoked or suspended under the mandatory provisions of the motor vehicle law for such violations as manslaughter, drunken driving, failing to stop after an accident, and operating on a revoked license.

(b) The license has been suspended for failure of an uninsured motorist to indemnify against or satisfy a claim arising from his operation of a motor vehicle.

The 1954 law represented a sound step forward in protection of the general public against drivers of demonstrated irresponsibility. House Bill 62 of the 1958 session would free such drivers, after a five-year period, from any obligation to carry liability insurance in order to operate a motor vehicle. Its sponsors contend that excessive charges for this form of compulsory insurance constitute an unreasonable hardship and burden on many motorists.

My investigation discloses that an automobile driver whose license is suspended for non-payment of a claim, but whose driving record is otherwise similar to that of the average motor vehicle operator can obtain the necessary insurance coverage from reputable companies for a surcharge ranging from five to ten per cent. A different situation is presented as to motorists whose licenses have been mandatorily revoked or suspended for serious criminal violations. This group of drivers, in general, is obviously a very poor insurance risk. A fire insurance company would probably deny coverage to a convicted arsonist, and one should expect a similar attitude by automobile insurance companies toward drunken or hit-and-run drivers. Only a relatively few companies will issue liability insurance for such risks. Their premium charges, of necessity, are excessively high as compared to the premium charges for normal drivers.

In my opinion, House Bill 62 is not a proper solution for any problems of hardship or unfairness which may occasionally arise under the present law. The instant measure does not solve such situations, but merely reduces the alleged hardship period. The heavy premium