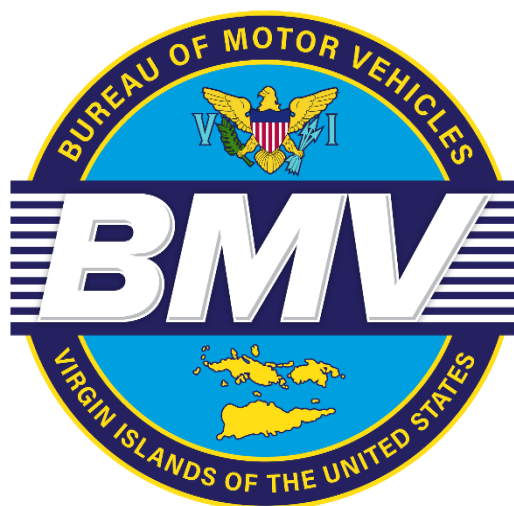


The 36th Legislature of the U.S. Virgin Islands  
Committee on Homeland Security, Justice, and Public Safety

Bureau of Motor Vehicles Testimony on Bill 36-0224

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BMV Testimony Bill #36-0224

Good afternoon, Senator, Clifford Joseph, Chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, Justice and Public Safety, and other Senators of the 36th Legislature present, members of the Committee, the viewing and listening audience.

My name is Barbara Jackson-McIntosh, Director of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to provide testimony in support of **Bill No. 36-0224**, which amends Title 20 of the Virgin Islands Code relating to the **moving violations point system**.

Currently, when a driver repeatedly violates the traffic laws and accumulates excessive points, the Bureau of Motor Vehicles cannot efficiently suspend that license. Instead, the BMV must petition the Superior Court and wait for judicial action before enforcement can occur. That process creates delays, burdens the court system, consumes government resources, and allows dangerous drivers to remain on the road longer than they should.

**Bill 36-0224 corrects that problem.**

This measure modernizes the administrative process while still preserving due process protections. Drivers still have rights, but the government also has a responsibility to act quickly when public safety is at risk. Administrative license suspension systems are being used successfully in jurisdictions throughout the country because they are more efficient, more practical, and more responsive to public safety concerns.

**This bill also improves fairness in the point system itself.**

Under the current law, points are deducted or credited based on the calendar year instead of an actual 12-month period. That approach creates inconsistency and unequal treatment. A driver should not receive an advantage or disadvantage simply because of what month a violation occurred. A rolling 12-month standard is more accurate, more equitable, and better reflects actual driving behavior.

**The financial penalties also need to be updated. These adjustments ensure penalties are meaningful and reinforce the seriousness of traffic violations.**

In fiscal year 2023 the number of citations that were filed with the Superior Court was approximately 7149, in fiscal year 2024 the number increased to 8,510 and in fiscal year 2025 there were approximately 8,402 citations filed for moving violations. As of April 30, 2026, the number of citations that were filed with the superior court for fiscal year 2026 is approximately 4,675. This data has shown that despite the best efforts of law enforcement and the educational efforts of the Office of Highway Safety there is still a blatant disregard for

roadway safety, traffic laws, other motorists, and pedestrians.

A \$25 fine may have made sense decades ago, but today it does not serve as a meaningful deterrent. Unfortunately, when penalties are too low, some drivers simply view them as a minor inconvenience rather than a consequence. Increasing the fine to \$200 reinforces the seriousness of traffic violations and encourages compliance with our laws.

Likewise, increasing the Driver Improvement Program fee from \$75 to \$100 is both reasonable and necessary. These programs are designed to educate drivers, reduce repeat violations, and improve roadway safety. The modest increase helps sustain and strengthen those programs while remaining accessible.

**We must remember what is truly at stake here.**

- Every reckless driver, every habitual violator, and every delayed enforcement action increase the risk of crashes, injuries, and fatalities on our roads.
- This legislation is not about punishment for punishment's sake. It is about prevention. It ensures that habitual violators are addressed **promptly and efficiently**.
- It encourages drivers to adopt **long-term safe driving habits**.
- It reduces administrative burdens on the courts.
- It aligns penalties with today's economic and enforcement realities.

Most importantly, it is about creating consequences that encourage safer behavior before tragedy occurs.

Bill 36-0224 strengthens accountability, improves efficiency, promotes fairness, and prioritizes public safety. It strikes the right balance between **enforcement, fairness, and education**, while modernizing an outdated system

For those reasons, the BMV supports Bill 36-0224.

Thank you for your time and consideration.