



**Testimony from the DC chapter of Families for Safe Streets
for the Committee on Transportation & the Environment
budget oversight hearing for the Department of Motor Vehicles
held on June 16, 2025**

To the Committee on Transportation & the Environment:

My name is Helaina Roisman and I am testifying on behalf of the [DC chapter of Families for Safe Streets](#). We are an organization of individuals who have either lost a loved one to a traffic crash, or who have been seriously injured. We acknowledge how critical budget decisions are in uncertain and declining revenue environments like the one we are currently experiencing. We also recognize that budgets reflect values. We expect DC's budget to reflect the District's prioritization of safety for all road users, consistent with MoveDC and other visioning and planning efforts that reflect extensive investment in public involvement and your constituents' input. Now is the time to commit funding and put words on paper into action.

We are here to urge the protection for existing and additional funding for the [Strengthening Traffic Enforcement, Education, and Responsibility \(STEER\) Amendment Act of 2024](#). We thank the Council for taking action last year to pass and fund key provisions of the STEER Act.

In these budget hearings last year, we testified prioritizing funding two key provisions that would have the most impact: (1) staff time at the Office of the Attorney General to pursue reckless drivers; and (2) the Department of Motor Vehicles' implementation of the intelligent speed assistance program for anyone convicted of criminal reckless driving. We are now emphasizing our desire to make sure these funds are protected throughout the budget negotiations.

- While reciprocity remains our ultimate goal, the STEER Act gave the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) the new authority to bring civil suits against vehicles and their drivers who have large unpaid traffic fines. We applaud this focus on the most reckless drivers who need to be held accountable. In February, the OAG issued [three civil enforcement actions against three Maryland drivers](#) who collectively incurred **226** infractions for speeding, among other citations, on DC streets. One of those drivers struck a child in a crosswalk. And they collectively failed to pay \$90,000 in fines for dangerous driving. And in April, the OAG issued [lawsuits against five drivers from Maryland and Virginia](#) who collectively had **957** citations for speeding, plus additional dangerous traffic infractions, totaling \$425,000 in unpaid fines, penalties and fees. This small investment for OAG staff time will pay dividends by ensuring our streets are safe

for all and building public trust when the District demonstrates its willingness to protect its residents.

- The STEER Act's intelligent speed assistance program was the most costly provision to fund. As we said last year, this program will have the greatest impact because the technology enables safe driving speeds while allowing convicted reckless drivers to still have access to their vehicles. We are exceptionally proud of the District of Columbia for being the first in the country to create this type of program, sparking inspiration and serving as a model for similar legislation that recently passed in [Virginia \(HB2096\)](#), [Georgia \(HB308\)](#), and [Washington state \(HB1596\)](#); and legislation that was under consideration [Maryland \(SB993/HB1139\)](#). We look forward to following the implementation of the District's program and are encouraged by the growing regional approach to ensure that our streets are safe for all.

There are additional parts of the STEER Act that still need funding, such as the creation of the **new point system** focused on priority booting and towing for vehicles with repeat violations and for the Department of Motor Vehicles to develop a **safe driving course** to waive the cost of fines upon course completion. DC Families for Safe Streets is focused on the ways to prioritize addressing the most reckless drivers on DC streets, who repeatedly threaten residents and visitors with their vehicles and who have, until now, been able to do so with impunity. The new point system will provide the framework for the removal of the vehicles with repeat violations regardless of whether fines are paid or unpaid. This neutralizes concerns that those with the ability to pay get a free pass, it requires accountability for all reckless drivers, and ultimately benefits all road users.

The Council should preserve funding for the funded portions of the STEER Act—OAG staff time and the ISA program—and we hope additional funding can be found for the point system and safe driving course.

Nearly 40% of DC households do not own cars. And people who walk, bike, and take transit in DC disproportionately pay in terms of being [victims of fatal crashes](#), [medical bills for their injuries](#), and a [transportation time tax](#). **Especially in the current challenging budget environment, these programs represent smart fiscal opportunities that can benefit our city both financially and in terms of public safety.**

These provisions have strong potential to be revenue positive, not merely cost drivers. The Attorney General's civil enforcement actions demonstrate the promising financial return on this modest investment. Additionally, the new point system for priority booting and towing of repeat violators needs to be implemented more efficiently to realize its revenue potential. When unsafe drivers demonstrate they cannot operate their vehicles responsibly, we need a streamlined process to remove these vehicles from our streets and directly recoup fines owed by these dangerous drivers through vehicle seizure, auction, or selling for scrap. This approach not only improves public safety but creates a clear pathway for cost recovery while addressing the most reckless offenders.