

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE REPORT

2025 Legislative Session

Reference No.: CR-077-2025

Draft No.: 2

Committee: HHSPS

Date: September 4, 2025

Action: FAV (A)

REPORT: Committee Vote: Favorable, with amendments 4-0 (Council Members Blegay, Fisher, Olson, Watson) (Excused Absence: CM Oriadha)

The Health, Human Services, and Public Safety Committee met on September 4, 2025, to consider CR-077-2025, sponsored by Council Member Calvin Hawkins.

Staff provided an overview of CR-077-2025, stating that it proposes creating a user-friendly driver handbook that explains what usually happens during a traffic stop, how law enforcement officers typically conduct themselves, and what drivers and passengers should do. The idea is to make traffic stops less stressful for everyone by helping citizens understand their rights and what to expect. The resolution proposes that the Office of Integrity, Compliance, and Police Accountability, in collaboration with the Police Accountability Board, draft the handbook.

Council Member Hawkins explained that in 2023, there were over 33,000 traffic stops in the county, and the goal of the handbook is to make the experience more positive for both drivers and police. He mentioned coordination with the County Executive's Office, the Police Department, and the Office of Integrity, Compliance, and Police Accountability.

Council Member Hawkins noted discussions suggested that the resolution be amended on page 1, line 19. The "NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED" clause was modified to state "the Office of Integrity, Compliance, and Police Accountability and the Prince George's County Police Department collaboratively draft a driver handbook that shall provide a description of law enforcement procedures during traffic stops. Once drafted, the driver handbook shall be submitted to the Police Accountability Board for its input prior to submission for County Council approval."

Mr. David Williams, the Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst, provided written comments on the Policy Analysis and Fiscal Impact Statement for CR-077-2025.

Deputy Chief George Nichols from the Police Department agreed with the amendment, emphasizing the importance of transparency and coordination. He said the Police Department is committed to working with the Office of Integrity, Compliance, and Police Accountability to draft the handbook, since officers conduct traffic stops and bring the necessary training. Deputy Chief Nichols expressed support for having the Police Accountability Board review the handbook to ensure alignment with best practices before it goes to the Council.

Cynthia A. Bridgford, Inspector General and Director of the Office of Integrity, Compliance, and Police Accountability, expressed support for drafting the Driver handbook with the Police Department. She noted that the Police Accountability Board is focused on data review and its annual report but agreed that the Board should review the handbook before it goes to the Council.

Sonia Owens, the county Executive's Office's Council Liaison, expressed support for the proposed amendment and asked the committee to recommend the resolution favorably.

The Office of Law finds CR-077-2025 to be in proper legislative form and finds no legal impediments.

Council Member Fisher asked how the handbook would be distributed, who would cover the cost, whether it would be updated regularly, and if digital or video formats in short, easy-to-digest segments to reach more residents could be included. She also suggested making it available in multiple languages to serve the county's diverse driving population.

Council Member Hawkins explained that subject matter experts are determining distribution methods. Deputy Chief Nichols indicated that possible approaches include community meetings, advisory groups, patrol officers at engagements, and online via county websites. It was emphasized that the handbook would not be handed out during traffic stops.

Council Member Watson asked if the handbook could be made available through the MVA, provided when people get their driver's license, and included in driver's education programs to help with distribution.

Leroy Maddox, Legislative Attorney, reviewed the amendments. Committee Chair Blegay made a motion, seconded by Council Member Waston, to move favorably on the amendments. Council Member Watson, seconded by Vice Chair Fisher, then moved favorably on CR-077-2025 as amended.

After discussion, the Health, Human Services, and Public Safety Committee voted 4-0 favorably, with amendments on CR-077-2025.