

## Steven Sepe

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**From:** will masse <willmasse@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 3, 2026 9:11 AM  
**To:** House State Government and Elections Committee  
**Subject:** Written Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 7989 – Front Registration Plates

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Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is **William Masse**, and I live in **Warwick, Rhode Island**. I am writing to strongly oppose House Bill 7989, which would exempt certain vehicles from the requirement to display a front-facing registration plate.

Front license plates are a basic but critical tool for traffic safety, accountability, and law enforcement. Weakening that requirement would reduce our ability to identify vehicles involved in traffic violations, reckless driving, and hit-and-run incidents.

Research consistently shows that two-plate systems improve vehicle identification. Studies cited by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) have found that states requiring both front and rear plates experience lower rates of certain vehicle-related crimes, including auto theft. Two plates increase the likelihood that a vehicle can be identified from multiple angles—whether by witnesses, cameras, or law enforcement.

Front plates are particularly important in modern traffic enforcement, where automated systems such as red-light and toll cameras often capture vehicles from the front. The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) has noted that states with two-plate requirements generally cite enhanced identification and enforcement capability as a primary reason for maintaining the policy. A single rear plate limits identification when a vehicle approaches an intersection camera, a pedestrian crossing, or a bike lane enforcement zone.

From a public safety standpoint, front plates significantly improve the ability to identify vehicles involved in hit-and-run crashes. In many pedestrian and cyclist collisions, witnesses see the vehicle from the front as it approaches or flees. Removing the front plate reduces the odds that critical identifying information can be captured quickly and accurately.

As someone who regularly rides a bicycle for transportation, accountability in traffic enforcement matters deeply to me. Vulnerable road users rely on clear identification of vehicles when dangerous driving occurs. Any policy that makes it harder to identify a vehicle involved in reckless behavior, speeding, or a crash undermines deterrence and reduces consequences for unsafe conduct.

While I understand that some vehicles are not manufactured with front plate brackets, convenience or aesthetics should not outweigh public safety and accountability. If necessary, bracket solutions exist and are widely available. Many states with strong traffic safety records continue to require front plates regardless of manufacturer defaults.

Rhode Island currently benefits from a two-plate system that supports law enforcement, traffic safety technology, and crash accountability. Moving away from that standard would decrease safety and make enforcement more difficult—particularly in cases involving traffic violations and hit-and-run incidents.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to oppose House Bill 7989.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
William Masse  
Warwick, Rhode Island