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THE COUNCIL
OF

THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Yusef Salaam

COUNCIL MEMBER, 9th DISTRICT, MANHATTAN

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AND DISPOSITIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

Summary of Res. 0853-2025: Allowing VIN Use in Notices of Violation When License Plates Are Obscured

Purpose:

This resolution urges the New York State Legislature and Governor to amend the **Vehicle and Traffic Law (VTL)** to allow **Vehicle Identification Numbers (VINs)** to be used in **Notices of Violation** in place of license plate numbers when a vehicle's plates are **missing, obscured, distorted, or concealed**.

Key Points:

1. Current Enforcement Challenge:

- The VTL requires traffic and parking summonses (Notices of Violation) to include a **license plate number**.
- If the plate is **missing, altered, or unreadable**, a violation can be dismissed.
- This limits enforcement and enables **toll evasion, red-light camera evasion, and hit-and-run obstruction**.

2. Public Safety & Fiscal Impact:

- Vehicles with concealed plates undermine:
 - **Camera-based enforcement** (e.g., for speeding, red lights, tolls).
 - **Investigations** into vehicle-related crimes and crashes.
- The **MTA reports revenue losses** from toll evasion due to these practices.
- In 2024, NYPD reportedly **seized over 7,500 vehicles** with illegal plate modifications.

3. Proposed Solution:

- Allow authorities to list a **VIN**—a vehicle's unique serial number—as the primary identifier in Notices of Violation **when the license plate is illegible or absent**.
- VINs are already tied to state **registration databases**, allowing proper identification of the vehicle owner.

4. Legislative Ask:

- Amend **VTL §238** to permit VINs as a valid identifier **in lieu of** a license plate number under specific conditions.

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Sponsors:

Council Member Yusef Salaam and 6 co-sponsors.

Legislative Status:

Adopted by the New York City Council as of **April 24, 2025**.