



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE MAE FLEXER
FORTY-FOURTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
ROOM 4009
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591
CAPITOL: (860) 240-8585
TOLL FREE: 1-800-842-8267
FAX: (860) 240-0206
E-MAIL: Mae.Flexer@cga.ct.gov

MEMBER
HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT
ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
INTERNSHIP COMMITTEE

February 24, 2010

Veterans' Affairs Committee

Testimony for HB-5265

*AAC the Expiration of Driver's Licenses Issued to Members of the
Armed Forces*

I want to thank Representative Graziani and Senator Maynard and the members of the committee for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 5265, An Act Concerning the Expiration of Driver's Licenses Issued to Members of the Armed Forces.

Congressman Joe Courtney met with our mutual constituent, Sergeant First Class John Bellville, while in Iraq on a Congressional Delegation trip. During this meeting, the Sergeant notified Congressman Courtney of a common driver's license renewal problem facing Connecticut service men and women. Under current law, an active duty soldier serving outside of the state cannot renew their license

Based off of the California model, I am proposing legislation, House Bill 5265, that will temporarily allow the license of a Connecticut service member, actively serving outside the state, to remain valid beyond its normal expiration date. This bill extends the validity of a license for up to 30 days following a service member's return from active duty or honorable separation from such service. The moratorium only takes effect while the person is driving, and only if both the license and discharge or separation papers are in his or her possession. Further, this exception will not apply to any license that has been suspended cancelled, or revoked.

Members of the armed forces should not be penalized by regulations that trigger during their time of service. To have our volunteer force incurring fines during the course of duty - due to their absence from the state and country they are protecting - sends a completely mixed message. Your committee deserves credit for removing obstacles from the paths of our troops returning home, and for untangling the red tape they may otherwise face. Other states have taken the time to address this discrepancy, and I strongly encourage your support in doing the same.

I wish to sincerely thank Rep. Graziani and Sen. Maynard for raising this bill and allowing it to be heard. I also want to genuinely thank Congressman Courtney for his interest in bringing this proposal before the General Assembly and his tremendous advocacy on behalf of this legislation.

January 29, 2010

2010-R-0045

DRIVER'S LICENSE RENEWALS FOR SERVICE MEMBERS STATIONED ABROAD

By: Kevin E. McCarthy, Principal Analyst

You asked whether other states have provisions for facilitating driver's license renewal for members of the armed forces stationed abroad.

SUMMARY

This report describes license renewal provisions in California, Georgia, Idaho, New York, Virginia, and Washington for members of the armed forces (service members). Most of these provisions apply when the service member is in another state or abroad.

In California, the license of a service member on active duty out of state is valid for up to 30 days following the date on which he or she is honorably separated from such service or returns to California.

Georgia (1) gives service members a six-month grace period to renew their licenses and (2) allows active duty military and their dependents (as well as students) to renew their license by mail.

Idaho permits members of the military preparing to deploy overseas or out of state to renew their license and vehicle registration up to 12 months early.

In New York, a driver's license is automatically extended while a person is on active duty and for up to six months after discharge.

Virginia allows a service member temporarily assigned to duty out of state, or his or her spouse or dependent, to apply for a military extension of his or her driver's license by mail. The license is valid for up to five years.

Washington allows service members and their families to obtain a license with the word "military" in place of the expiration date. A license with this designation does not have to be renewed for the duration of the service member's service.

CALIFORNIA

The license of a service member on active duty out of state is valid beyond its normal expiration date. The license is valid for up to 30 days following the date on which the service member is honorably separated from such service or returns to California, unless the license has been suspended, cancelled, or revoked. The license is valid only when the service member, while driving, has it and his or her discharge or separation papers in his or her immediate possession (Cal. Veh. Code § 12817).

GEORGIA

Georgia allows a six-month grace period for a service member whose driver's license expires while he or she is on active duty outside the state. The grace period is not added to the expiration date on a service member's driver's license. A service members may drive in Georgia on an expired license for six months after the date he or she is

service member's dependents.) After 60 days, the person must have a valid New York license in order to drive in the state (NY Veh. & Traf. Law § 251).

VIRGINIA

A service member who is temporarily assigned to duty out of state, or the spouse or dependent of the member, may apply for a military extension of his or her driver's license by mail. The extension is valid for up to five years.

Normally, drivers who are out of state have 60 days from their return to renew their vehicle registration. The law gives service members a 90-day grace period, beginning on the date they are no longer serving outside the United States, to comply with the vehicle registration laws. To qualify, the vehicle must be operated by the service member only while possessing (1) orders or other military documentation demonstrating that he or she is entitled to the grace period and (2) the most recent DMV registration card.

Service members, for purposes of the registration provision, include members on active-duty service with the armed forces, National Guard, or other reserves (Va. Code Ann. § 46.2-221.2).

WASHINGTON

Washington issues a license to service members and their families with the word "military" in place of the expiration date. These individuals do not have to renew their driver's licenses for the length of the member's military service. The license is available to members of the active duty armed forces and members of the National Guard and reserves who are called to duty for 180 days or more, and their spouses, domestic partners, and dependents.

The license is valid until 90 days after the service member is honorably discharged, unless it is suspended, cancelled, or revoke before then. A license issued to a reservist called to active duty and his or her spouse or dependent is only in effect while the reservist is on active duty.

An ordinary driver's license held by a member of the military remains in effect under the same conditions as a "military" license, even after the expiration date has passed. But, getting a license with "military" on it ensures that DMV will keep a record of the license for the entire length of military service, and make it easier for private businesses and government officials to determine that the license is valid (Wash. Rev. Code § 46.20.027).

KM: df/sd