



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES



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*Testimony of the Department of Motor Vehicles  
Transportation Committee Public Hearing  
March 3, 2010*

## **Raised S.B. 340 AN ACT CONCERNING PUBLIC SERVICE LICENSE ENDORSEMENTS, ACTIVITY VEHICLES, AND THE DEFINITIONS OF "CARRIER" AND "STUDENT TRANSPORTATION VEHICLE"**

The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) would like to thank the Transportation Committee for considering this proposal and raising S.B. 340, which seeks to clarify the applicability of motor vehicle license endorsements to operators of non-school bus vehicles involved in the transportation of school children. To be clear, this bill maintains the current applicability of background checks and medical fitness standards for applicants or holders of such endorsements.

The current statutory framework includes a "V" endorsement for a "student transportation vehicle" and an "A" endorsement for a "student activity vehicle." However, such vehicles are not identified by objective characteristics such as their size, weight or even color. Indeed, a "student activity vehicle" is defined as:

(1) "Activity vehicle" means a *student transportation vehicle* that is used to transport students in connection with school-sponsored events and activities, but is not used to transport students to and from school; (emphasis added; Conn. Gen. Stat. §14-1 (1))

For example, a passenger van type vehicle leaving a group home and transporting clients to school or bringing those clients from school to the residence would be a student transportation vehicle, requiring the operator to hold a "V" endorsement. The same type of vehicle, bringing the same clients to a picnic, movie or similar non-school sponsored event, has no special status, requiring the operator to have only a regular operator's license (Class D). Yet if the picnic, movie or similar event were school sponsored, the operator would be required to hold, at a minimum, an "A" endorsement.

Similarly, a person who is employed by an educational institution may conduct a ski trip which includes students in their private vehicle without any special endorsement, but the same trip, if school sponsored, would require the staff person to have an endorsement on their license. These common occurrences

illustrate the difficulty facing law enforcement personnel in attempting to determine the appropriate requirement to apply.

The present statutory arrangements have resulted in significant confusion among an array of individuals and service agencies. Neither of these endorsements requires either knowledge or road skills testing. Indeed, the primary criteria for determining the necessity for the operator to possess such an endorsement are the status of the passengers as students and the starting and ending points of each trip.

DMV believes that consolidation of the "A" endorsement into the "V" will provide for uniform training requirements and standards for such operators while lessening the confusion among the public and enforcement personnel.

A further step in that direction is proposed through revision of the current definition of "carrier" as defined in Conn. Gen. Stat. §14-212 to read as follows:

2) "Carrier" means (A) any local or regional school district, any educational institution providing elementary or secondary education or any person, firm or corporation under contract to such district or institution engaged in the business of transporting [school children;] students, or (B) any person, firm or corporation [providing transportation for compensation exclusively to] engaged in the business of transporting primarily persons under the age of twenty-one years for compensation; [or (C) any corporation, institution or nonprofit organization providing transportation as an ancillary service primarily to persons under the age of eighteen years;]

Many non-profit organizations now find themselves in a difficult dilemma through the use of a vehicle which may, on occasion, transport school age children to or from a school or school sponsored events. Questions arise as to the proper registration type of such vehicles, (passenger, combination, student transportation vehicle, or livery) in addition to the appropriate credential for the operator.

Often, insurance costs for such agencies are impacted by the registration classification, diverting financial resources from programs and services to overhead. By improving the definition to focus on the compensatory nature of the vehicle's operation, it is hoped that many of these ambiguities in both registration and licensing may be removed.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this bill.