



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES

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Testimony of Department of Motor Vehicles
Commissioner Melody A. Currey
Transportation Committee Public Hearing
February 22, 2012

H.B. No. 5164 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE MOTOR VEHICLE LAWS (Bill requested by the Department)

Good morning Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrero, Senator Boucher, Representative Scribner and other members of the Transportation Committee.

I am pleased to be here today to testify in support of HB 5164, AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE MOTOR VEHICLE LAWS. This legislation deals with various issues regarding the administration of motor vehicle laws and also recommends several technical changes to existing laws. Overall, these proposed changes would continue to allow the Department of Motor Vehicles to improve customer service, increase efficiencies, and improve the safety of the state's highways and roadways.

I will provide a summary of some of the sections of the bill rather than provide a detailed section by section review.

Technical/Clarification changes – Sections 4, 5, 14, 16, 18, 19 – These sections are technical in nature. Section 4(a) amends subsection (a) of section 14-41 to add back the word "other" that was erroneously deleted during the 2011 session. Section 5 made reference to a substance abuse treatment program under section 14-227f that was repealed during the 2011 session. This reference is deleted and replaced. Section 14 provides the correct statutory references to the additional moving violations included in section 54 of Public Act 11-213. Sections 16, 18 and 19 change the references to "duplicate" title to "replacement" title in sections 14-174, 14-178, and 14-192 in order to correspond to information technology upgrades occurring within DMV.

Sections 11 through 13 delete references to intermediate processors in other statutes and Section 24 repeals the licensing requirements for intermediate processors. There were only three licenses issued under section 14-67j since it was passed in 1990 and the last of these licenses expired in 1993.

Customer Related Changes – Sections 1, 4, 7, 8, 17, 23 – These sections would help improve efficiencies for DMV operations and its customers. Section 1 would continue DMV's expansion efforts of its on-line dealer functions to help make dealer transactions easier and more efficient.

Section 4(e) would allow for a one-time extension of a license renewal or ID card renewal for individuals who are undergoing a verification of their immigration status and citizenship through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Most of these verifications occur quickly, however, some require additional checks that involve longer periods of time. This will prevent their licenses from expiring during the time that it takes to complete the checks.

This extension will also benefit people who are out of state for extended periods and are absent at renewal time.

Section 7 would assess a \$50 fee for a dealer that allows its surety bond to lapse after being so notified by the DMV. Failure to maintain the bond puts consumers at risk so this fee should help to prevent such lapses. Currently, DMV is required to undergo a time consuming process for bond lapses and many dealers do not obtain a replacement bond until DMV takes enforcement action. Section 8 is similar to section 7 as it would impose a \$50 fee for lapses in a dealer's financial responsibility.

Section 17 would allow DMV to expand the options for maintaining titles in electronic format.

Section 23 would create a new registration, called a courtesy registration, for a period of six months designed to assist people who were previously registered in another state and are having trouble obtaining the title or the lien release from that state. This courtesy registration cannot be issued unless the person has the proper sales documents and meets all of the other requirements to register the vehicle. The fee would be equal to one-quarter of the amount of the two year registration.

Towing of Vehicles – Section 9 - In 2010, changes were made to this towing statute that allowed only licensed wreckers to do all towing in the state. There was one section that set forth limited exceptions but it quickly became apparent due to numerous complaints from legitimate businesses that more exceptions were needed. Section 9 of this bill expands the list of exceptions to include those businesses engaged in contract towing (consensual towing performed under contract with another business such as an auction or a recycler) for which they use commercial plates. The exceptions would also include car carriers that engage in the interstate hauling of vehicles. This section also adds a penalty provision for violating this section.

Registrations – Sections 2 and 3 – Section 2 would phase out "year of manufacture" plates for antique, rare or special interest motor vehicles. These plates are problematic for DMV and law enforcement because the user is allowed to display a plate (that was in use in the year the vehicle was manufactured) that does not reflect the actual registration number of the vehicle. DMV has received complaints from police officers who are not able to determine the registration number of the vehicle unless they make a motor vehicle stop. In certain cases, the "year of manufacture" number on the plate being displayed actually has been issued to another vehicle with an active plate. Also, year of manufacture plates are being produced and sold on the internet, which was not the case when this provision took effect. In the proposed legislation, such plates that are currently on a vehicle may continue to be displayed during the vehicle's current registration cycle.

Section 3 would limit the registration period for an "experimental test plate" for one year after the date of issuance. These plates are intended to be used to test experimental automotive equipment or vehicles but are not meant to be used as long-term registrations of a vehicle.

Licensing – Section 22 – Section 22 would require DMV to work with the Department of Corrections to establish procedures with DOC to encourage incarcerated individuals to renew their license or identification card through the mail (provided the person's image is

already on file). DOC currently works with DMV to help prisoners obtain their license when they are released from prison. This work could be reduced if prisoners renewed their credentials while in prison thereby reducing the need obtain a new license upon release.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of one of the Department's legislative initiatives. I would be happy to try to answer any questions.

