Transportation Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-924
Title: AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION NOTICE, THE INTERNATIONAL REGISTRATION PLAN, CARRIERS, THE MEDICAL ADVISORY BOARD AND OTHER MOTOR VEHICLE STATUTES.
Vote Date: 3/20/2019
Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute
PH Date: 2/27/2019
File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Transportation Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The Department of Motor Vehicle’s agency request bill was drafted to clarify existing DMV statute regarding: state-issued passenger endorsement physical standards which will be changed to be in line with the federal standards, DUI Ignition interlock device violations which currently do not cover those who drive before installing an ignition interlock device, digital versions of International Registration Plan (IRP) documents, and which vehicles are eligible for dual license plates & which vehicles can use only a rear license plate.

The bill will make changes to the vehicle registration renewal process with the aim of increasing the efficiency of the process & decreasing the number of those driving with expired registrations, and changing requirements that “The DMV Commissioner ensure” school carriers check a suspended and revoked driver list twice monthly as it is impossible to ensure anything other than the carriers have logged onto the list through the secure portal.

Also addressed within this bill are:

- Updates to the administration of the Autonomous Vehicle Task Force & associated pilot program allowing the task force to elect its own chair instead of waiting on appointments which have been sitting unfilled, and changes to the definition of “operator” for the purposes of the AV pilot program to enable the testing of AV’s that are not car based.
• Creation of a task force to study out of state vehicle registrations by Connecticut residents in an effort to recoup potential lost revenue from such vehicles.

• DMV and DAS to jointly study the current system used to evaluate motor carriers that provide or seek to provide commercial motor vehicles services to the state or a municipality and make recommendations to make the system more efficient as several motor carrier companies noted the process to be time consuming an inefficient.

• Raising fines for violation of reserved parking for people with disabilities also known as handicapped parking.

• Allowing school bus operators to use mobile telephones and electronic devices in the same manner as two-way radios to communicate with school officials and specified medical or emergency professionals, current law regarding use of electronic devices while driving did not address this new technology.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Judeen Wrinn, Acting Commissioner DMV-

Section 1 authorizes DMV to send, in lieu of an application for a motor vehicle registration renewal, a notice indicating that the registrant has a compliance issue, and/or owes fines or fees to the DMV. This process will reduce the number of customers who drive without a valid registration, and will reduce the volume of correspondence that the DMV is required to send to customers who fail to comply.

Section 3 makes a statutory change that conforms to an amendment adopted by the International Registration Plan, Inc. (IRP), of which Connecticut is a member jurisdiction. Recently, IRP was amended to require member jurisdictions to accept a registration document, known as a “cab card,” in an electronic format.

Sections 5 and 9 clarify that any person who applies for a Class D license with an endorsement or a Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) is required to meet the physical standards that are in federal regulations. Connecticut is required to apply the federal standards for CDL holders and has already adopted the federal standards for endorsement holders through state regulations, which under the current statutory structure, it is required to promulgate. This change avoids duplication of effort if the federal regulations change.

Section 6 eliminates a requirement that the commissioner “ensure” that carriers transporting students are reviewing a suspended and revoked driver list published by the DMV. Carriers are legally required to review the list twice monthly in accordance with section 14-276 of the general statutes. The DMV provides access to the list, to every carrier that requests it, through a secure portal. However, the DMV cannot “ensure” that they are reviewing the report, even if they are accessing the portal.

Section 7 requires every carrier to register with the department and establishes penalties for not doing so. This provides DMV with a means to track whether carriers are using the portal, and enforce a penalty for non-compliance.
Section 8 clarifies that a person who is required to install and maintain an ignition interlock device (IID) as a condition for reinstatement of a license, who fails to install the IID and who operates a motor vehicle violates section 14-215(c), operating under a suspension that resulted from an alcohol-related offense. Currently, the statute is clear that if one installs an IID, but is operating a vehicle without one, the violation falls under 14-215(c). However, if a person never installs the device, and is operating a motor vehicle, the current language of the statute is ambiguous.

Section 10 adds flexibility around DMV’s selection of medical professionals to serve on its medical advisory board. Currently, the statute requires the Commissioner to appoint nominees submitted by the Connecticut State Medical Society or another medical association or organization comprised of physician assistants or advance practice registered nurses. The amended language permits these organizations to make recommendations to the commissioner for his or her consideration, but does not limit appointments to medical professionals from those organizations.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

None

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

JOSEPH R. SCULLEY President Motor Transport Association of Connecticut (MTAC)-
MTAC requests an addition to this bill, which would address DMV’s current system for evaluation of motor carriers that are current or prospective state contractors. MTAC respectfully submits that this system is deeply flawed and needs to be eliminated. We suggest changing the existing standard. The existing system is subjective and sets a standard that is more stringent than federal law. Additionally, commercial motor vehicle inspection data in Connecticut is skewed, making carriers look less safe than they actually are.

MTAC requests a change in state law to adhere to federal regulation of commercial motor carriers/vehicles. Essentially, if the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), which regulates the trucking industry, says the carrier is safe and allowed to operate, they are eligible for a state contract. If FMCSA has revoked the operating authority of a motor carrier because they are unsafe, they would not be eligible for a state contract.

Reported by: Philip N Mainiero         Date: 4/2/19