

Transportation Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-982

Title: AN ACT REVISING MOTOR VEHICLE STATUTES.

Vote Date: 3/24/2021

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/8/2021

File No.: 489

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Transportation Committee

[Sen. Paul M. Formica, 20th Dist.](#)

[Rep. Mitch Bolinsky, 106th Dist.](#)

REASONS FOR BILL:

A multi-faceted piece of legislation crafted after working with industry and association professionals to enhance existing practices within the state and expand opportunities for consumers.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Department of Transportation, DOT, DOT-DOT-Comments

This testimony is in opposition of sections of the bill. It quotes, "By allowing commercial sized non-profit vehicles to access the Parkway, CTDOT runs the risk of sending mixed messages to the general public that commercial vehicles are allowed on the Parkway. This would also create a challenge from an enforcement perspective and create a safety hazard for travelers on the Parkway." In addition, "Also, Section 9 of the bill grants the right of way at an intersection to vehicles in a funeral procession. The Department is concerned this section could increase the potential for collisions. The Department does not recommend funeral processions have the right-of-way at locations where traffic control devices such as "STOP" signs or traffic signals have been installed. The motoring public is conditioned to obey these devices and the presence of a funeral procession is not always immediately obvious to these motorists. For these safety reasons, the Department does not support this section of S.B. 982."

Magubane, Sibongile, Commissioner-DMV Anti

This testimony opposes certain parts of the bill. It references that “This proposed section relaxes the teen driving restrictions by permitting a newly licensed teen to transport a sibling to or from school within the first six months of licensure. As currently written, the law prohibits 16 and 17-year-old drivers from having any passengers in the vehicle for six months after obtaining a license except for a driving instructor, parents or legal guardian with a valid driver’s license or a person providing instruction who is at least 20 years old and has held a license for at least 4 years with no suspensions during the last 4 years.” In addition, “This proposal is counter to existing evidence regarding teen driver safety. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, adding one more passenger with a teen driver results in a 19% increase in fatal crashes - adding two or more results in a 27% increase. Simply put, the more the passengers the greater the risk.”

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Avallone, Joy, General Counsel-Insurance Association of CT-Pro

This testimony is in favorite of the bill. It quotes, “Subsection (h), which begins on line 638 of page 20, will eliminate the notarization requirement for a power of attorney used to support an application for transfer of a certificate of title in claims involving salvage vehicles and also for applications for a duplicate certificate of title in instances where the insured has lost the original certificate of title. This will help to facilitate and expedite the claims process in these specific cases, which will benefit both insureds and insurers.”

Binder, Mark, Director of Government Affairs-Copart-Pro

This testimony is in favorite of the bill. It quotes, “Section 16 of SB 982 provides for an alternative process for insurance companies to obtain the title to a total loss vehicle when they have paid the full value of a claim and have not received the proper or negotiable title documents from the owner. This is an issue for our industry that leaves an insurance company with a vehicle where they have indemnified the owner, yet it cannot be legally sold in Connecticut.”

Dotzeva, Katerina, Director of Government Affairs-Insurance Auto Auctions-Pro

This testimony is in support of the bill. It quotes, “Removing these burdensome requirements and allowing an electronic signature on a POA would speed payment of the claim to the vehicle owner who just lost the use of his car and needs to purchase another. It also allows for quicker settlement during catastrophic events when consumers may be displaced.” In addition, “This bill would also allow an insurance company to obtain a certificate of title, salvage title or salvage parts only title when the insurance company has paid a total loss claim and acquired ownership of the vehicle, but the vehicle owner or lienholder did not provide the certificate of title to the insurance company.”

Sampson, Rob, Senator-CGA-Pro Section 19

“I would like to focus my strong support on Section 19 of the bill which would require the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles to offer the driver's license knowledge test in Vietnamese and Albanian languages.” In addition, “ Currently the State of Connecticut offers the knowledge test in several languages but the lack of options for members of these communities has been an ongoing problem and I thank the committee for their inclusion in Section 19 of Senate Bill No. 982.”

Dunn, Jack, EMT-Middlesex County-Comments

“I personally have been a volunteer EMT and firefighter in Middlesex County for a little over four years. In Connecticut most towns are served by volunteer fire and EMS organizations and in most cases those volunteer firefighters or EMTs are responding from their homes or work to their respective fire or EMS departments or directly to emergencies. In order to facilitate this Connecticut has courtesy light laws allowing for members of fire departments to use blue lights and members of volunteer ambulance agencies to use green lights. Blue lights are widely recognized as an emergency light throughout our nation and since many EMS agencies in Connecticut are also a part of their local fire departments the volunteer EMTs in those departments are able to use blue lights.”

Lynch, Brian T., O.D.-CT Association of Optometrists-Proposed Amendments

The testimony of this response is in support of the bill. It quotes, “The proposed changes maintain an individual’s ability to have this screening conducted by the DMV or now by an outside medical provider. Both the type of provider and parameters of the screening are already spelled out in the current statues. These changes will insure we are only licensing qualified candidates and provide applicants with a choice as to who will conduct the screening.”

McCleary, Erin, O.D.-CT Association of Optometrists-Pro with Amendments-

“I feel strongly that a vision assessment is truly needed prior to granting a driver’s license. The previous language which removed vision screenings from the DMV services would have had a direct impact on both the license applicants and medical professionals needing to fill the gap. I am immensely pleased that the committee took my suggestions to heart and has amended the language to now allow EITHER a free DMV screening OR a visual assessment certification by the previously-defined medical professionals. This gives back the benefit of choice to the constituent and providers can perform full eye exams without concern for liability. For those applicants concerned about COVID, and who don't want to have potential increased exposure risk at the DMV, they can choose to see their own personal health professional.”

Turczak - prevelige, Mark - Jason, President - Legislative Chair-CT Academy of Physician Assistants-Pro- With Amendments

“As a group, PAs have discussed the inclusion of PAs providing health care for drivers with the CT Medical Society and the CT Hospital Association, who both agree that it is of benefit to include PAs in care provided to drivers. We then request that PAs be included when physicians and APRNs are listed as providing care, to avoid the confusion and limitations on care that may be appropriately provided.”

American Property Casualty Insurance Association-Pro with amendments

“APCIA supports the addition of language starting at line 569 on page 18 of SB 982 that would provide our members with the ability to obtain a salvage title to a vehicle if they are not otherwise able to obtain the title to the vehicle from the owner.” In addition, “ By adopting this change, those costs will be, if not eliminated, substantially reduced.”

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Baldis, James A., Chief-Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company-Anti Section 18

This testimony is in opposition of the bill. It quotes, “As Chief of the Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company, which provides fire protection services to the Town of Simsbury via an all-volunteer firefighting force, I feel this will create unnecessary confusion for our motorists as well as for our members if they see a flashing blue light being used in town since we have a separate ambulance service in town and calls are handled completely separately.”

Haynes, Wes, Executive Director-Merritt Parkway Conservancy-Anti Section 13a-26

This testimony is in opposition of the bill. It quotes, “The existing statute currently waives restrictions on the occasional use of service buses measuring no more than 8’ high, 7’ wide and 17’ long. This size is at the outer border of vehicles safe to operate on the parkways. The proposed substitution would waive restrictions on two classes of much larger service busses, class A being 10’ high, 8’ wide and 24’ long, and class B being 9’ high, 6.5’ wide and 19’ long. These new classes are too large in scale for the parkway and should not be permitted to operate.”

Moore, Kelly McConney, Senior Policy Counsel-ACLU-Anti

“The ACLU-CT believes that due to systemic racism in policing across the country, the most effective way to keep communities of color safe from over policing and police violence is to reimagine the role of police.” In addition, “Because of the disparities in traffic enforcement, and especially because of the unreasonably high danger that traffic stops pose to drivers of color, the legislature should be very careful when making new traffic infractions. Every new law that police enforce through traffic stops creates a new opportunity for police interactions, each of which creates a dangerous situation for a driver of color stopped. Thus, we believe that creating new traffic infractions should be weighed very carefully.”

Paquette, Nicole, Legislative Co-Chair-CT Funeral Directors Association-Anti

This testimony opposes the bill. It is quoted, “Funeral Director’s paramount concern of funeral processions is for the safety of the operators of motor vehicles, their passengers, and the public who encounter them. We believe that by requiring motor vehicle operators to obey existing traffic laws at all times provides for the greatest measure in preventing death, personal injury or property damage that may be suffered by any person(s) in a funeral procession, and to the public.” In addition, “Risks of death, personal injury or property damage that result from a failure to grant the right-of-way are irreplaceable, or are too great of a loss for motorists, passengers, and the public to suffer. Such losses outweigh the deterrent of an infraction violation described in lines 282-283.”

Schroll Jr., Ted, Legislative Representative-CT State Firefighters Association-Anti Section 18

“We respectfully request that you delete Section 18 of this bill, which would expand the use of blue flashing lights to any other group of individuals except volunteer firefighters. Its passage could cause much confusion to Connecticut’s motorists, and have a serious detrimental effect on the quality of service provided by volunteer firefighters in the State of Connecticut.”

Reported by: Philip N Mainiero

Date: 4/12/21