



STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES

60 State Street, Wethersfield, CT 06161

<http://ct.gov/dmv>



Public Hearing Testimony Commissioner Antonio 'Tony' Guerrero

Transportation Committee

Good morning, Sen. Cohen and Rep. Lemar; Sen. Lopes and Rep. Berger-Girvalo; Sen. Hwang and Rep. Kennedy; and Distinguished Members of the Transportation Committee.

My name is Tony Guerrero, Commissioner of Motor Vehicles. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on proposals included on today's agenda. As I enter my second year as the DMV Commissioner, I do want to begin by emphasizing what I see at the agency every day:

- Outstanding, dedicated employees
- An excellent senior leadership team
- A relentless focus on customer service
- A drive for accessibility, efficiency, and improvement

I appreciate the Legislature's and this Committee's partnership in support of the DMV's work on behalf of residents, as well as with our modernization journey, which continues in earnest. Here are just a few of our recent accomplishments:

- The DMV recently surpassed 2 million online transactions.
- Our appointment system facilitated more than 1.1 million branch appointments in 2023.
 - Customers can canvass branches to seek the earliest appointment time.
 - Our system re-directs customers if the option exists to complete an online transaction.
 - We provide advance documentation lists to support first-time transaction success.
- We've expanded languages offered for those taking the written knowledge test.
- The DMV continues to bring services to new audiences by visiting communities.

In terms of today's agenda, I would respectfully submit the following:

SUPPORT

Senate Bill No. 183, An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Department of Motor Vehicles

This is our annual agency bill, which includes minor and technical changes to DMV-related statutes to streamline processes; to support customer service and consistent enforcement across regulated entities; and to offer additional consumer protections.

Sections 1 and 2 would clarify and enhance application requirements for certain 3rd parties that conduct titling and registration transactions for customers outside of branch office locations. These updated requirements are intended to align such entities with other DMV business licensing and strengthen consumer protections for individuals served by them.

Section 3 would address the lack of current DMV authority to impose a penalty for failure to renew a business license in a timely manner for transporter plate registrants. The DMV believes this will further incentivize timely renewals and aligns applicable provisions with oversight of other DMV regulated business entities (which generally have 45 days to renew a license upon expiration or are subject to a \$100 penalty). The DMV expects this update, along with communication to licensees, to increase on-time compliance.

Sections 4 and 5 would address an item of inconsistency in statute and set a minimum surety bond requirement for automobile recyclers. Currently, recyclers are not required to have a bond on file with the DMV. A bond provides a safety net that can be used to address unexpected situations, ensures consumers are protected by the recycler's obligations, and encourages responsible business practices. These sections also seek to clarify the sequence in which a business application is considered by the DMV, to streamline the background check process. This process requires that a business application must be signed, and privacy rights acknowledged, prior to fingerprinting, which current statute does not necessarily reflect.

Sections 6 and 7 address regulation of Connecticut's licensed driving schools, including clarification that existing statutory provisions governing the operation of driving schools applies to each new location that a licensee opens. Additionally, new language proposes an increase in driving schools' surety bond requirement – the first in years - as current levels do not align with present costs related to taking a full driver education course (which can total in the hundreds of dollars per customer).

Section 8 is a proposal to enhance customer convenience and service. This provision would authorize vehicle inspections in prescribed cases, such as salvage, to be conducted at licensed repairers (currently, a trip to the DMV Wethersfield office is necessary). Over the past three years, there have been approximately 2,000 salvage inspections conducted by the DMV per year. If authorized, the DMV would plan a careful and limited program rollout to ensure a quality network of selected providers. The agency believes this proposal could create efficiencies and reduce operating costs to the DMV for staffing and facilities upkeep.

Sections 9 and 10, to be clear, do not propose to change anything with school bus driver preparation or required proficiencies. Current statutory language referencing Type I and Type II busses, and gross vehicle weight of 10,000, is outdated and reflects pre-Commercial Driver's License (CDL) classifications, dating back decades. The DMV's proposed statutory revisions in these sections are designed to align with current, federal CDL licensing requirements.

Sections 11 through 26 include a technical update to change several references from commercial 'driving instruction' permit to commercial 'learner's' permit, which would align with current federal language and CDL permit classifications.

OTHER COMMENTS

House Bill No. 5204, An Act Concerning the Registration and Use of Low-Speed Vehicles

The DMV has concerns with this proposal. The DMV has safety concerns about allowing such vehicles to operate on public roadways, including potentially impeding traffic and posing a danger to operators and other motorists. Low-speed vehicles provide little protection to their operators or passengers in the event of a crash and are more suited to large private or gated communities. In addition, this legislation would propose to have the DMV register and title such low-speed vehicles, resulting in substantial workloads not currently performed by the DMV. If adopted, internal work, IT programming changes, and other system design modifications not currently budgeted would be required.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on these proposals. I look forward to working with committee members on these and other matters as the session moves forward.