



# Senate

General Assembly

**File No. 645**

February Session, 2026

Senate Bill No. 261

*Senate, April 15, 2026*

The Committee on Judiciary reported through SEN. WINFIELD of the 10th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the bill ought to pass.

**AN ACT CONCERNING TRANSFER OF A MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION UPON THE DEATH OF THE OWNER OF THE VEHICLE.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 14-16 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

3 (a) A motor vehicle registration expires upon transfer of ownership  
4 of the motor vehicle. The Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall enter  
5 such expiration in the records of the Department of Motor Vehicles only  
6 when the transferor cancels his or her registration for such motor vehicle  
7 in accordance with procedures established by the commissioner or  
8 when the transferee reregisters such motor vehicle with the department,  
9 whichever occurs first.

10 (b) If a motor vehicle is owned by one owner who is a natural person,  
11 such owner may designate, in writing in a space provided on the  
12 certificate of registration for such motor vehicle, a beneficiary who shall

13 assume ownership of such motor vehicle after the death of the owner  
14 and upon the making of an application pursuant to this subsection. The  
15 owner making such designation shall have all rights of ownership of  
16 such motor vehicle during the owner's life and the beneficiary shall have  
17 no rights in such motor vehicle until such time as the owner dies and an  
18 application is made pursuant to this subsection. Not later than sixty  
19 days after the death of the owner or prior to the end of the registration  
20 period, whichever is longer, the beneficiary may make application to the  
21 commissioner for the issuance of a certificate of title and a certificate of  
22 registration for such motor vehicle in the beneficiary's name. Such  
23 application shall be accompanied by: (1) The original certificate of  
24 registration in which the beneficiary is designated pursuant to this  
25 subsection; (2) a death certificate for the deceased owner; (3) such proof  
26 of the beneficiary's identity as the commissioner may require; (4) the  
27 transfer fee required by subsection (c) of this section; and (5) any  
28 applicable fees for registration, title and number plates as required  
29 under this chapter and chapter 247. If the beneficiary fails to make such  
30 application within the time period specified in this subsection, the  
31 beneficiary shall have no right to obtain ownership of and title to such  
32 motor vehicle under this subsection after the expiration of such time  
33 period. The right of the beneficiary to obtain ownership of and title to  
34 such motor vehicle under this subsection shall be subordinate to the  
35 rights of each lienholder whose security interest in such motor vehicle  
36 is duly recorded pursuant to chapter 247. The commissioner may adopt  
37 regulations, in accordance with chapter 54, to implement the provisions  
38 of this subsection.

39 (c) If the owner of a registered motor vehicle dies, the registration for  
40 the vehicle shall, unless the vehicle is destroyed, continue in force as a  
41 valid registration until the end of the registration period unless: (1)  
42 Ownership of the vehicle is transferred pursuant to subsection (b) of this  
43 section or by the deceased owner's executor, administrator, legatee or  
44 distributee prior to the end of the registration period, in which case the  
45 registration shall continue in force until the time of the transfer; or (2)  
46 ownership of the vehicle is transferred to the brother, sister, father,  
47 mother, child or spouse of the owner, in which case the registration

48 shall, upon the payment of a fee of twenty dollars, continue in force until  
49 the end of the registration period or until the ownership is sooner  
50 transferred to a person other than such a relative. If at the end of the  
51 registration period the relative has not transferred ownership of the  
52 vehicle and the relative applies for registration of the vehicle, the  
53 registration shall not be subject to the provisions of subsection (a) of  
54 section 12-71b.

55 (d) If a motor vehicle is transferred in connection with the  
56 organization, reorganization or dissolution, or because of the partial  
57 liquidation, of an incorporated or unincorporated business in which  
58 gain or loss to the transferor is not recognized for federal income tax  
59 purposes under the Internal Revenue Code and Treasury regulations  
60 and rulings issued thereunder, the registration of the vehicle shall, upon  
61 the payment of a fee of twenty dollars, continue in force until the end of  
62 the registration period or until the registration is sooner transferred to  
63 anyone outside the original business organization. If the transferee of  
64 the motor vehicle has not transferred ownership of the motor vehicle to  
65 anyone outside the original business organization at the end of the  
66 registration period and the transferee applies for a registration for the  
67 vehicle, the registration shall not be subject to the provisions of  
68 subsection (a) of section 12-71b.

69 (e) A person who transfers ownership of a registered motor vehicle  
70 to another may have registered in his name, upon the filing of a new  
71 application and the payment of the fee required by subsection (i) of  
72 section 14-49, another motor vehicle for the remainder of the registration  
73 period if the gross weight of the other motor vehicle is the same or less  
74 than that of the transferred motor vehicle and the registration of the  
75 transferred motor vehicle has been surrendered. If the gross weight of  
76 the other motor vehicle is greater than the gross weight of the motor  
77 vehicle the registration of which has been surrendered, the applicant  
78 shall pay, in addition to such fee, the difference between the fee paid by  
79 him for the surrendered registration and the fee for the registration of  
80 the motor vehicle of greater gross weight. The minimum fee for any such  
81 transfer shall be twenty dollars.

82 (f) Any person may transfer an unexpired registration of a motor  
 83 vehicle such person owns or leases for a period of one year or more, to  
 84 another motor vehicle owned or so leased by such person upon payment  
 85 of the fee required by subsection (i) of section 14-49. Any person  
 86 transferring such a leased motor vehicle shall provide the commissioner  
 87 with evidence that the lessor has granted permission for such transfer.  
 88 If a transfer is made to a motor vehicle of greater gross weight or from  
 89 one class of registration to another, credit shall be given toward the new  
 90 registration in accordance with schedules established by the  
 91 commissioner. The commissioner may adopt regulations, in accordance  
 92 with chapter 54, to implement the provisions of this subsection.

93 (g) Any person who sells any motor vehicle, other than a new motor  
 94 vehicle, for which a certificate of title has not been issued and which is  
 95 not registered under the provisions of subsections (e) or (g) of section  
 96 14-12, shall, within forty-eight hours of the sale, certify under oath to the  
 97 commissioner, on blanks provided by him, such information as the  
 98 commissioner may require. Until the commissioner receives the  
 99 certification under oath required by this subsection, he shall not issue a  
 100 registration other than for a new motor vehicle and shall not renew a  
 101 registration other than for the same owner.

102 (h) Any person who violates any provision of subsection (a) of this  
 103 section shall be subject to the penalty provided for false statement. Any  
 104 person who violates any provision of subsection (g) of this section shall,  
 105 for a first offense, be deemed to have committed an infraction, and, for  
 106 a subsequent offense, shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars  
 107 or imprisoned not more than one year or both.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	October 1, 2026	14-16

**JUD**      *Joint Favorable*

*The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.*

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**OFA Fiscal Note****State Impact:** None**Municipal Impact:** None**Explanation**

The bill creates a secondary deadline by which a beneficiary designated on a motor vehicle registration certificate must transfer the vehicle after the death of the owner. This does not result in a fiscal impact because it is not expected to change the number of vehicles registered in any municipality for property tax purposes.

**The Out Years****State Impact:** None**Municipal Impact:** None

**OLR Bill Analysis****SB 261*****AN ACT CONCERNING TRANSFER OF A MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION UPON THE DEATH OF THE OWNER OF THE VEHICLE.*****SUMMARY**

This bill creates a secondary deadline by which the person designated by a motor vehicle's owner to assume ownership when the owner dies (the beneficiary) may apply to the Department of Motor Vehicles for a new title and registration in the beneficiary's name. By doing so, the bill potentially gives beneficiaries more time to transfer vehicle ownership.

Under current law, a beneficiary has 60 days after the owner's death to apply for a new title and a registration in his or her name. The bill instead gives applicants until 60 days after the death or before the registration's expiration, whichever is later. By law, motor vehicle registrations are generally issued for three-year periods.

As under existing law, if the beneficiary fails to apply within this timeframe, he or she has no rights to ownership and title. Additionally, the beneficiary's right to obtain ownership and title is subordinate to the rights of any lienholder with a recorded security interest.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 37 Nay 4 (03/30/2026)