
Transportation Committee

HB 1635

Brief Description: Concerning the administration of exams and renewals for drivers' licenses.

Sponsors: Representatives Upthegrove, Clibborn, Eddy, Armstrong, Lias, Rivers, Angel, Van De Wege, Wilcox, Maxwell, Rolfes, Finn, Sullivan, Dammeier, Orwall, Warnick and Moscoso.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes driver training schools that are licensed by the Department of Licensing (DOL) to administer both the knowledge portion and the driving portion of the driver's license examination.
- Caps the fees that may be charged by a driver training school to administer each portion of the driver's license examination.
- Requires the DOL to adopt rules to oversee the driver training schools' administration of the driver's license examinations.
- Changes the expiration period for a driver's license, increases the fee for a driver's license renewal, and allows for a waiver of part of the renewal fee when a person renews online or through the mail.
- Appropriates \$200,000 to the DOL to promote use of its online services and to develop additional online services.

Hearing Date: 2/10/11

Staff: Wendy Malkin (786-7114).

Background:

An applicant for a new or renewed driver's license must successfully pass a driver licensing examination to qualify for a driver's license. The Department of Licensing (DOL) is required to give examinations at locations and times that are reasonably accessible. The driver's license examination includes a written examination that tests an applicant's knowledge of traffic laws,

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and a driving examination that tests an applicant's ability to safely operate a motor vehicle. The DOL may waive parts of the examination under certain conditions; for example, the DOL may waive the examination for a person renewing a license unless the DOL determines the person is not qualified to hold a driver's license. The fee for the examination is \$20, which is used to cover the costs of processing the application, administering the vision exam, and administering the driver's license examination. In addition to the examination fee, a person must pay \$25 for the license.

The DOL is responsible for overseeing the commercial driver training school program. Driver training schools, in addition to school districts, provide traffic safety education courses, which must be completed by an individual under the age of 18 before he or she can receive a driver's license. Driver training schools are licensed by the DOL, and driver training schools must be annually approved by the DOL. The DOL sets standards and requirements for the driver training schools, including standards for curriculum and licensing driver training school instructors. The DOL has standards and processes in place to suspend, revoke, and deny licenses to driver training schools.

A driver's license expires on the fifth anniversary of the licensee's birthdate following the issuance of the license. A person may renew his or her license up to a year before the expiration date by renewing in person at a DOL licensing office. A person eligible to renew online or by mail may renew up to six weeks in advance. The fee to renew a license is \$25.

Summary of Bill:

Driver training schools that are licensed by the DOL are authorized to administer both the knowledge portion and the driving portion of the driver's license examination. The fees that may be charged by a driver training school to administer the examination are limited to \$25 for the driving portion of the examination and \$10 for the knowledge portion of the examination. The DOL is required to adopt rules to oversee the driver training schools' administration of the examinations. The rules must include provisions on requirements for recordkeeping, requirements for inspections and audits, standards for the content of the examinations and which staff may administer the examinations, requirements for retesting and expiring examination results, and sanctions for schools that violate the rules.

The expiration period for a driver's license is changed from five years to six years. The fee for renewing a driver's license is changed from \$25 to \$30; however, the DOL may waive \$5 of the fee for a person who renews online or through the mail.

An appropriation of \$200,000 is made to the DOL to promote use of its online services and to develop additional online services.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.