
Transportation Committee

HB 1944

Brief Description: Addressing vehicle license plate and registration fraud.

Sponsors: Representative Haler.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Makes it unlawful for a person to display a license plate on a vehicle that does not match the registration.
- Makes it a gross misdemeanor for a person that switches or flips license plates on a vehicle or falsifies a vehicle registration.
- Authorizes a law enforcement officer to impound a vehicle that is found with an installed license plate flipping device as evidence.

Hearing Date: 2/25/13

Staff: Jerry Long (786-7306)

Background:

The Department of Licensing (DOL) must furnish to all persons making satisfactory application for vehicle registration two identical license plates, each containing the license plate number, or one plate if the vehicle is of the type that only requires it to have a single license plate. The license plates must be attached conspicuously at the front and rear of the vehicle if two plates have been issued. It is unlawful to: display a license plate on the front or rear of any vehicle that was not issued by the DOL; display a license plate on any vehicle that has been changed, altered, or disfigured, or become illegible; use a holder, frames, or other materials that change alter, or make a license plate illegible; or operate a vehicle unless a valid license plate or plates are attached to the vehicle as required by statute. These are traffic infractions with a fine amount of \$124.

Transfer of a license plate or plates between vehicles before application has been made and approved by the DOL is a traffic infraction subject to a fine not to exceed \$500.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill:

The bill makes it unlawful for a person to display a license plate on a vehicle that does not match or correspond with the registration of the vehicle unless the vehicle is inventory for a properly licensed vehicle dealer. A person who switches or flips license plates on a vehicle or falsifies a vehicle registration, in addition to any traffic infraction, is guilty of a gross misdemeanor punishable by confinement of up to 364 days in the county jail and a fine of \$5,000, which may not be suspended, deferred, or reduced. A vehicle that is found with an installed license plate flipping device may be impounded by a law enforcement officer as evidence.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 22, 2013

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