

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESHB 1944

C 135 L 13
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Addressing vehicle license plate and registration fraud.

Sponsors: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representative Haler).

House Committee on Transportation
Senate Committee on Transportation

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 that was not issued by the DOL on the front or rear of any vehicle; display on any vehicle a license plate 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.

Summary:

It is unlawful for a person:

- to display a license plate that does not match or correspond with the registration of the vehicle unless the vehicle is inventory for a vehicle dealer; and
- to have an installed license plate-flipping device on a vehicle, to use technology to flip a license plate, or to use technology to change the appearance of a license plate on a vehicle.

It is also unlawful for a person or entity to sell a license plate-flipping device or sell technology that will change the appearance of a license plate. A person who switches or flips license plates on a vehicle physically, utilizes technology to flip or change the appearance of

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a license plate on a vehicle, sells a license plate-flipping device or technology that will change the appearance of a license plate, 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 \$1,000 for the first offense, \$2,500 for a second offense, and \$5,000 for any subsequent offense, which may not be suspended, deferred, or reduced.

A vehicle that is found with an installed license plate-flipping device or technology to change the appearance of a license plate may be impounded by a law enforcement officer as evidence. Citizens are encouraged to notify law enforcement immediately if they observe a vehicle with a license plate-flipping device.

"License plate-flipping device" is defined as a device that enables a license plate on a vehicle to be changed to another license plate either manually or electronically. This also includes technology that is capable of changing the appearance of a license plate to appear as a different license plate.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	87	11
Senate	48	0

Effective: July 28, 2013