

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6399

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Transportation, February 10, 1998

Title: An act relating to security of drivers' licenses.

Brief Description: Increasing security of drivers' licenses.

Sponsors: Senators Oke, Haugen, Morton and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/5/98, 2/10/98 [DPS, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6399 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Prince, Chair; Goings, Haugen, Heavey, Horn, Jacobsen, Morton, Oke, Patterson, Prentice, Rasmussen and Sellar.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Benton, Vice Chair.

Staff: Paul Neal (786-7315)

Background: Many government offices and private businesses rely upon the presentation of a driver's license or identicard to verify a person's identity. However, fraud is often perpetrated against both government and businesses by the use of fraudulent identification.

Washington State law provides that the Department of Licensing (DOL) "shall implement and use such process or processes in the preparation and issuance of drivers' licenses and identicards that prohibit as nearly as possible the alteration or reproduction of such cards, or the superimposing of other photographs on such cards, without ready detection" (Wash. Rev. Code 46.20.114).

The 1996 supplemental transportation budget required the Legislative Transportation Committee (LTC) to undertake a feasibility study to (1) identify technologies to improve the Washington State driver's license and identicard, particularly security enhancements; (2) develop an analysis of the attendant costs; and (3) recommend technologies and an implementation schedule for their incorporation.

The feasibility study was conducted under the direction of the LTC's Driver Document Working Group (DDWG), comprised of three members of the House Transportation Committee and three members of the Senate Transportation Committee. To aid its review, DDWG retained Q&A Consulting, a firm specializing in driver licensing, and Sterling Associates, a firm specializing in cost accounting, financial analysis and technology

management. The final report of the consultants' findings and recommendations was issued in December. LTC adopted the recommendations detailed in the report at its December 4, 1996, meeting.

The recommendations include procurement of a new state driver's license and identicard that incorporates the following features:

(1) A central issuance system. The central issuance of a driver's license requires that a licensee be given a temporary license at the issuance office and that the permanent license, which is produced at a central production site, be mailed to the licensee. Currently, DOL issues licenses instantly while the licensee waits.

(2) A digital imaging system. The digital imaging system allows a person's picture and signature images to be captured, displayed on a computer monitor, and stored on a database system. The image files can later be retrieved and used to make positive identification of a person who is applying for a duplicate license. Currently, DOL uses color photographic cameras and systems to produce drivers' licenses, and maintains a negative file of all the pictures it takes. Many jurisdictions (28 states and seven Canadian provinces) use digital imaging to produce their licenses. Of those jurisdictions that do not use digital imaging, ten are in the process of converting to it.

(3) Machine-readable technologies. Machine readable technologies are codes that can be read by a computer for fast and accurate capture of data. Additionally, machine-readable technologies can verify the authenticity of a license by comparing the information displayed on the face of the license to that stored in the machine-readable feature. The study recommends that the new driver's license contain a magnetic stripe, one-dimensional bar code, and an encrypted two-dimensional bar code. Magnetic stripes, like those placed on most credit cards, are the most popular type of machine readable technology used by North American driver licensing agencies; presently, they are used by at least 23 jurisdictions. One-dimensional bar codes, like those commonly found on grocery items, are used by at least nine licensing jurisdictions. Two-dimensional (2-D) bar codes, which hold a large amount of data (1,000 bytes), are used by at least ten licensing jurisdictions. Of those states using the 2-D bar code, most store variable driver information (name, address, height, weight, etc.); others are also placing a black and white picture or signature in the code.

(4) An optical variable device. The image and/or color change of an optical variable device helps to prevent fraudulent duplication because attempts at alteration are apparent via distortion or destruction of the license or identicard.

(5) A second picture of the card holder in ultraviolet ink. Digital printing enables the applicant's ultraviolet photo to be added to the license or identicard for presentation of information that is uniquely tied to the card holder.

Summary of Substitute Bill: In accordance with the recommendations in the *Feasibility Study of Driver's License Technologies*, by July 1, 1999, the Department of Licensing (DOL) must enter into a contract for the procurement of a new state driver's license and identicard. The department's authority to include some of the features recommended in the report is restricted while other items are prohibited. The following items are specifically discussed.

(1) A digital imaging system. The department is prohibited from incorporating facial recognition technology into the digital photograph that would allow a one-to-many search. A one-to-many search compares one photograph to all the other photographs in a database to determine if there is a match.

(2) Machine readable technologies, including a magnetic stripe, one-dimensional bar code, and a two-dimensional bar code. This allows information currently on the driver's license to be included in a form that can be read electronically. Any machine readable information must be encrypted. Access to information in machine readable format is limited to DOL, the State Patrol, commissioned law enforcement officers, courts, prosecuting attorneys and other officials who are designated by law. Unauthorized access to information encrypted in machine readable form is made a gross misdemeanor.

(3) Prohibition on use of biometrics. Submission of biometrics, i.e. physical attributes unique to individual persons such as fingerprints, cannot be required as part of the license application process. The only biometric image that the department is authorized to collect and store is the digital photograph (see above).

(4) Prohibition against including Social Security number on the driver's license. Except as prohibited or limited in the bill, the department may incorporate other driver's license features recommended in the report as discussed above.

The fee for a driver's license is raised from \$14 to \$20. The fee for an identicard is raised from \$4 to \$6. The fee increase is effective July 1, 1999. The driver's license remains valid for four years. The identicard remain valid for five years.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The reference to the federal requirement for a more secure license is stricken from the intent section.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The driver's license and identicard fee increase provisions are effective July 1, 1999. The remainder of the bill is effective 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: A more secure license will make it more difficult for persons to produce false identification. The license will be more durable and much more difficult to alter or duplicate.

Testimony Against: The license constitutes an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy. It is the first step to a national identification card.

Testified: PRO: Senator Oke, prime sponsor; Judy Giniger, DOL; Jerry Sheehan, ACLU (with amendments); CON: Diane Eaton, Don Roberts, Larry Witt, North Olympic Phone Tree; Tim Schellberg, Sheriffs & Police Chiefs (concerns); Janeane Dubuar, Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility.