S-4398.2			

## SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6419

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State of Washington 56th Legislature 2000 Regular Session

By Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Swecker, Gardner, Fraser, T. Sheldon, Goings, Rasmussen and Oke)

Read first time 02/04/00.

- 1 AN ACT Relating to abandoned vehicles; amending RCW 46.20.031,
- 2 46.20.289, 46.20.291, 46.20.311, 46.55.085, 46.55.105, 46.55.110,
- 3 46.63.030, 46.63.060, and 46.63.110; creating a new section; and
- 4 prescribing penalties.
- 5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:
- 6 **Sec. 1.** RCW 46.20.031 and 1999 c 6 s 7 are each amended to read as 7 follows:
- 8 The department shall not issue a driver's license to a person:
- 9 (1) Who is under the age of sixteen years;
- 10 (2) Whose driving privilege has been withheld unless and until the 11 department may authorize the driving privilege under RCW 46.20.311;
- 12 (3) Who has been classified as an alcoholic, drug addict, alcohol
- 13 abuser, or drug abuser by a program approved by the department of
- 14 social and health services. The department may, however, issue a
- 15 license if the person:
- 16 (a) Has been granted a deferred prosecution under chapter 10.05
- 17 RCW; or
- 18 (b) Is satisfactorily participating in or has successfully
- 19 completed an alcohol or drug abuse treatment program approved by the

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- 1 department of social and health services and has established control of 2 his or her alcohol or drug abuse problem;
- 3 (4) Who has previously been adjudged to be mentally ill or insane, 4 or to be incompetent due to a mental disability or disease. The 5 department shall, however, issue a license to the person if he or she 6 otherwise qualifies and:
- 7 (a) Has been restored to competency by the methods provided by law; 8 or
- 9 (b) The superior court finds the person able to operate a motor 10 vehicle with safety upon the highways during such incompetency;
- 11 (5) Who has not passed the driver's licensing examination required 12 by RCW 46.20.120 and 46.20.305, if applicable;
- 13 (6) Who is required under the laws of this state to deposit proof 14 of financial responsibility and who has not deposited such proof;
- 15 (7) Who is unable to safely operate a motor vehicle upon the highways due to a physical or mental disability. The department's conclusion that a person is barred from licensing under this subsection 18 must be reasonable and be based upon good and substantial evidence. 19 This determination is subject to review by a court of competent 20 jurisdiction( $(\dot{\tau})$
- 21 (8) Who has violated his or her written promise to appear, respond, 22 or comply regarding a notice of infraction issued for abandonment of a 23 vehicle in violation of RCW 46.55.105, unless:
  - (a) The court has not notified the department of the violation;
- 25 (b) The department has received notice from the court showing that
  26 the person has been found not to have committed the violation of RCW
  27 46.55.105; or
- (c) The person has paid all monetary penalties owing, including completion of community service, and the court is satisfied that the person has made restitution as provided by RCW 46.55.105(2))).
- 31 **Sec. 2.** RCW 46.20.289 and 1999 c 274 s 1 are each amended to read 32 as follows:
- The department shall suspend all driving privileges of a person when the department receives notice from a court under RCW 46.63.070(5), 46.63.110(5), or 46.64.025 that the person has failed to respond to a notice of traffic infraction, failed to appear at a
- 37 requested hearing, violated a written promise to appear in court, or
- 38 has failed to comply with the terms of a notice of traffic infraction

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- or citation, other than for ((a notice of a violation of RCW 46.55.105 1 or)) a standing, stopping, or parking violation. A suspension under 2 this section takes effect thirty days after the date the department 3 4 mails notice of the suspension, and remains in effect until the 5 department has received a certificate from the court showing that the case has been adjudicated, and until the person meets the requirements 6 7 In the case of failure to respond to a traffic of RCW 46.20.311. 8 infraction issued under RCW 46.55.105, the department shall suspend all 9 driving privileges for ninety days and until all penalties have been 10 paid. A suspension under this section does not take effect if, prior to the effective date of the suspension, the department receives a 11 12 certificate from the court showing that the case has been adjudicated.
- 13 **Sec. 3.** RCW 46.20.291 and 1998 c 165 s 12 are each amended to read 14 as follows:
- The department is authorized to suspend the license of a driver upon a showing by its records or other sufficient evidence that the licensee:
- 18 (1) Has committed an offense for which mandatory revocation or 19 suspension of license is provided by law;
- 20 (2) Has, by reckless or unlawful operation of a motor vehicle, 21 caused or contributed to an accident resulting in death or injury to 22 any person or serious property damage;
  - (3) Has been convicted of offenses against traffic regulations governing the movement of vehicles, or found to have committed traffic infractions, with such frequency as to indicate a disrespect for traffic laws or a disregard for the safety of other persons on the highways;
- 28 (4) Is incompetent to drive a motor vehicle under RCW 46.20.031(3);
- (5) Has failed to respond to a notice of traffic infraction, failed to appear at a requested hearing, violated a written promise to appear in court, or has failed to comply with the terms of a notice of traffic infraction or citation, as provided in RCW 46.20.289;
  - (6) Is subject to suspension under RCW 46.20.305;

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- 34 (7) Has committed one of the prohibited practices relating to drivers' licenses defined in RCW ((46.20.336)) 46.20.0921; ((or))
- 36 (8) Has been certified by the department of social and health 37 services as a person who is not in compliance with a child support

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- 1 order or a residential or visitation order as provided in RCW
- 2 74.20A.320; or

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order.

- 3 (9) Has committed an infraction under RCW 46.55.105.
- 4 **Sec. 4.** RCW 46.20.311 and 1998 c 212 s 1 are each amended to read 5 as follows:
- (1)(a) The department shall not suspend a driver's license or 6 7 privilege to drive a motor vehicle on the public highways for a fixed period of more than one year, except as specifically permitted under 8 9 RCW 46.20.342 or other provision of law. Except for a suspension under 10 RCW 46.20.289, 46.20.291(5), or 74.20A.320, whenever the license or driving privilege of any person is suspended by reason of a conviction, 11 12 a finding that a traffic infraction has been committed, pursuant to chapter 46.29 RCW, or pursuant to RCW 46.20.291 or 46.20.308, the 13 suspension shall remain in effect until the person gives and thereafter 14 15 maintains proof of financial responsibility for the future as provided 16 in chapter 46.29 RCW. If the suspension is the result of a violation of RCW 46.61.502 or 46.61.504, the department shall determine the 17 18 person's eligibility for licensing based upon the reports provided by 19 the alcoholism agency or probation department designated under RCW shall deny reinstatement until enrollment 20 46.61.5056 and participation in an approved program has been established and the 21 22 person is otherwise qualified. Whenever the license or driving 23 privilege of any person is suspended as a result of certification of 24 noncompliance with a child support order under chapter 74.20A RCW or a 25 residential or visitation order, the suspension shall remain in effect until the person provides a release issued by the department of social 26
- (b)(i) The department shall not issue to the person a new, duplicate, or renewal license until the person pays a reissue fee of twenty dollars.

and health services stating that the person is in compliance with the

- (ii) If the suspension is the result of a violation of RCW 46.61.502 or 46.61.504, or is the result of administrative action under RCW 46.20.308, the reissue fee shall be one hundred fifty dollars.
- (2)(a) Any person whose license or privilege to drive a motor vehicle on the public highways has been revoked, unless the revocation was for a cause which has been removed, is not entitled to have the license or privilege renewed or restored until the person provides

- evidence from the court that all penalties have been paid and restitution has been made, and: (i) After the expiration of one year from the date the license or privilege to drive was revoked; (ii) after the expiration of the applicable revocation period provided by RCW 46.20.3101 or 46.61.5055; (iii) after the expiration of two years for persons convicted of vehicular homicide; or (iv) after the expiration of the applicable revocation period provided by RCW 46.20.265.
- 8 (b)(i) After the expiration of the appropriate period, the person 9 may make application for a new license as provided by law together with 10 a reissue fee in the amount of twenty dollars.
- (ii) If the revocation is the result of a violation of RCW 11 46.20.308, 46.61.502, or 46.61.504, the reissue fee shall be one 12 hundred fifty dollars. If the revocation is the result of a violation 13 of RCW 46.61.502 or 46.61.504, the department shall determine the 14 15 person's eligibility for licensing based upon the reports provided by 16 the alcoholism agency or probation department designated under RCW 17 46.61.5056 and shall deny reissuance of a license, permit, or privilege to drive until enrollment and participation in an approved program has 18 19 been established and the person is otherwise qualified.
- 20 (c) Except for a revocation under RCW 46.20.265, the department shall not then issue a new license unless it is satisfied after 21 investigation of the driving ability of the person that it will be safe 22 to grant the privilege of driving a motor vehicle on the public 23 24 highways, and until the person gives and thereafter maintains proof of 25 financial responsibility for the future as provided in chapter 46.29 26 RCW. For a revocation under RCW 46.20.265, the department shall not issue a new license unless it is satisfied after investigation of the 27 driving ability of the person that it will be safe to grant that person 28 29 the privilege of driving a motor vehicle on the public highways.
- (3)(a) Whenever the driver's license of any person is suspended pursuant to Article IV of the nonresident violators compact or RCW 46.23.020 or 46.20.289 or 46.20.291(5), the department shall not issue to the person any new or renewal license until the person pays a reissue fee of twenty dollars.
- 35 (b) If the suspension is the result of a violation of the laws of 36 this or any other state, province, or other jurisdiction involving (i) 37 the operation or physical control of a motor vehicle upon the public 38 highways while under the influence of intoxicating liquor or drugs, or

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- 1 (ii) the refusal to submit to a chemical test of the driver's blood
- 2 alcohol content, the reissue fee shall be one hundred fifty dollars.
- 3 **Sec. 5.** RCW 46.55.085 and 1993 c 121 s 1 are each amended to read 4 as follows:
- 5 (1) A law enforcement officer discovering an unauthorized vehicle 6 left within a highway right of way shall attach to the vehicle a 7 readily visible notification sticker. The sticker shall contain the 8 following information:
  - (a) The date and time the sticker was attached;
- 10 (b) The identity of the officer;
- 11 (c) A statement that if the vehicle is not removed within twenty12 four hours from the time the sticker is attached, the registered owner
  13 will have committed the traffic infraction of littering--abandoned
  14 vehicle and the vehicle may be taken into custody and stored at the
- 15 owner's expense; and

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- 16 (d) The address and telephone number where additional information 17 may be obtained.
- 18 (2) If the vehicle has current Washington registration plates, the 19 officer shall check the records to learn the identity of the last owner 20 of record. The officer or his department shall make a reasonable 21 effort to contact the owner by telephone in order to give the owner the 22 information on the notification sticker.
  - (3) If the vehicle is not removed within twenty-four hours from the time the notification sticker is attached, the law enforcement officer may take custody of the vehicle and provide for the vehicle's removal to a place of safety. A vehicle that does not pose a safety hazard may remain on the roadside for more than twenty-four hours if the owner or operator is unable to remove it from the place where it is located and so notifies law enforcement officials and requests assistance.
- 30 (4) For the purposes of this section a place of safety includes the 31 business location of a registered tow truck operator.
- 32 **Sec. 6.** RCW 46.55.105 and 1999 c 86 s 5 are each amended to read 33 as follows:
- 34 (1) The abandonment of any vehicle creates a prima facie 35 presumption that the last registered owner of record is responsible for 36 the abandonment and is liable for costs incurred in removing, storing,

1 and disposing of the abandoned vehicle, less amounts realized at 2 auction.

- 3 (2) If an unauthorized vehicle is found abandoned under subsection 4 (1) of this section and removed at the direction of law enforcement, the last registered owner of record is guilty of ((a)) the traffic 5 infraction of "littering--abandoned vehicle," unless the vehicle is 6 redeemed as provided in RCW 46.55.120 and the registered owner pays a 7 8 fine of fifty dollars. In addition to any other monetary penalty 9 payable under chapter 46.63 RCW, the court shall not consider all 10 monetary penalties as having been paid until the court is satisfied that the person found to have committed the infraction has made 11 restitution in the amount of the deficiency remaining after disposal of 12 the vehicle under RCW 46.55.140. 13
  - (3) A vehicle theft report filed with a law enforcement agency relieves the last registered owner of liability under subsection (2) of this section for failure to redeem the vehicle. However, the last registered owner remains liable for the costs incurred in removing, storing, and disposing of the abandoned vehicle under subsection (1) of this section. Nothing in this section limits in any way the registered owner's rights in a civil action or as restitution in a criminal action against a person responsible for the theft of the vehicle.

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22 (4) Properly filing a report of sale or transfer regarding the vehicle involved in accordance with RCW 46.12.101(1) relieves the last 23 24 registered owner of liability under subsections (1) and (2) of this 25 section. If the date of sale as indicated on the report of sale is on 26 or before the date of impoundment, the buyer identified on the latest 27 properly filed report of sale with the department is assumed liable for the costs incurred in removing, storing, and disposing of the abandoned 28 29 vehicle, less amounts realized at auction. If the date of sale is 30 after the date of impoundment, the previous registered owner is assumed 31 to be liable for such costs. A licensed vehicle dealer is not liable under subsections (1) and (2) of this section if the dealer, as 32 transferee or assignee of the last registered owner of the vehicle 33 34 involved, has complied with the requirements of RCW 46.70.122 upon selling or otherwise disposing of the vehicle, or if the dealer has 35 timely filed a transitional ownership record or report of sale under 36 37 RCW 46.12.103. In that case the person to whom the licensed vehicle dealer has sold or transferred the vehicle is assumed liable for the 38

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- 1 costs incurred in removing, storing, and disposing of the abandoned 2 vehicle, less amounts realized at auction.
- (5) For the purposes of reporting notices of traffic infraction to the department under RCW 46.20.270 and 46.52.101, and for purposes of reporting notices of failure to appear, respond, or comply regarding a notice of traffic infraction to the department under RCW 46.63.070(5), a traffic infraction under subsection (2) of this section is not considered to be a standing, stopping, or parking violation.
- 9 (6) The finding that an infraction has been committed will result
  10 in suspension of a person's driving privileges for ninety days and
  11 until all penalties have been paid and restitution has been made.
- 12 <u>(7)</u> A notice of infraction for a violation of this section may be 13 filed with a court of limited jurisdiction organized under Title 3, 35, 14 or 35A RCW, or with a violations bureau subject to the court's 15 jurisdiction.
- 16 **Sec. 7.** RCW 46.55.110 and 1999 c 398 s 6 are each amended to read 17 as follows:
- 18 (1) When an unauthorized vehicle is impounded, the impounding 19 towing operator shall notify the legal and registered owners of the impoundment of the unauthorized vehicle and the owners of any other 20 items of personal property registered or titled with the department. 21 The notification shall be sent by first-class mail within twenty-four 22 23 hours after the impoundment to the last known registered and legal 24 owners of the vehicle, and the owners of any other items of personal 25 property registered or titled with the department, as provided by the law enforcement agency, and shall inform the owners of the identity of 26 the person or agency authorizing the impound. The notification shall 27 include the name of the impounding tow firm, its address, and telephone 28 29 The notice shall also include the location, time of the 30 impound, and by whose authority the vehicle was impounded. The notice shall also include the written notice of the right of redemption and 31 32 opportunity for a hearing to contest the validity of the impoundment pursuant to RCW 46.55.120. 33
- (2) In addition, if a suspended license impound has been ordered, the notice must state the length of the impound, the requirement of the posting of a security deposit to ensure payment of the costs of removal, towing, and storage, notification that if the security deposit is not posted the vehicle will immediately be processed and sold at

- auction as an abandoned vehicle, and the requirements set out in RCW 46.55.120(1)(b) regarding the payment of the costs of removal, towing, and storage as well as providing proof of satisfaction of any penalties, fines, or forfeitures before redemption. The notice must also state that the registered owner is ineligible to purchase the vehicle at the abandoned vehicle auction, if held.
- 7 (3) In the case of an abandoned vehicle, or other item of personal 8 property registered or titled with the department, within twenty-four 9 hours after receiving information on the owners from the department 10 through the abandoned vehicle report, the tow truck operator shall send 11 by certified mail, with return receipt requested, a notice of custody 12 and sale to the legal and registered owners and of the penalties for 13 the traffic infraction littering--abandoned vehicle.
- (4) If the date on which a notice required by subsection (3) of this section is to be mailed falls upon a Saturday, Sunday, or a postal holiday, the notice may be mailed on the next day that is neither a Saturday, Sunday, nor a postal holiday.
- 18 (5) No notices need be sent to the legal or registered owners of an 19 impounded vehicle or other item of personal property registered or 20 titled with the department, if the vehicle or personal property has 21 been redeemed.
- 22 **Sec. 8.** RCW 46.63.030 and 1995 c 219 s 5 are each amended to read 23 as follows:
- 24 (1) A law enforcement officer has the authority to issue a notice 25 of traffic infraction:
- 26 (a) When the infraction is committed in the officer's presence;
- (b) When the officer is acting upon the request of a law enforcement officer in whose presence the traffic infraction was committed; or
- 30 (c) If an officer investigating at the scene of a motor vehicle 31 accident has reasonable cause to believe that the driver of a motor 32 vehicle involved in the accident has committed a traffic infraction.
- 33 (2) A court may issue a notice of traffic infraction upon receipt 34 of a written statement of the officer that there is reasonable cause to 35 believe that an infraction was committed.
- 36 (3) If any motor vehicle without a driver is found parked, 37 standing, or stopped in violation of this title or an equivalent 38 administrative regulation or local law, ordinance, regulation, or

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- resolution, the officer finding the vehicle shall take its registration number and may take any other information displayed on the vehicle which may identify its user, and shall conspicuously affix to the vehicle a notice of traffic infraction. <u>In the case of an abandoned</u> vehicle, the notice must be entitled "Littering--Abandoned Vehicle," and give notice of the monetary penalty.
- 7 (4) In the case of failure to redeem an abandoned vehicle under RCW 8 46.55.120, upon receiving a complaint by a registered tow truck 9 operator that has incurred costs in removing, storing, and disposing of an abandoned vehicle, an officer of the law enforcement agency 10 responsible for directing the removal of the vehicle shall send a 11 notice of infraction by certified mail to the last known address of the 12 registered owner of the vehicle. The officer shall append to the 13 notice of infraction, on a form prescribed by the department of 14 15 licensing, a notice indicating the amount of costs incurred as a result 16 of removing, storing, and disposing of the abandoned vehicle, less any 17 amount realized at auction, and a statement that monetary penalties for the infraction will not be considered as having been paid until the 18 19 monetary penalty payable under this chapter has been paid and the court 20 is satisfied that the person has made restitution in the amount of the deficiency remaining after disposal of the vehicle. 21
- 22 **Sec. 9.** RCW 46.63.060 and 1993 c 501 s 9 are each amended to read 23 as follows:
- (1) A notice of traffic infraction represents a determination that an infraction has been committed. The determination will be final unless contested as provided in this chapter.
- 27 (2) The form for the notice of traffic infraction shall be 28 prescribed by rule of the supreme court and shall include the 29 following:
- 30 (a) A statement that the notice represents a determination that a 31 traffic infraction has been committed by the person named in the notice 32 and that the determination shall be final unless contested as provided 33 in this chapter;
- 34 (b) A statement that a traffic infraction is a noncriminal offense 35 for which imprisonment may not be imposed as a sanction; that the 36 penalty for a traffic infraction may include sanctions against the 37 person's driver's license including suspension, revocation, or denial;

- 1 that the penalty for a traffic infraction related to standing,
  2 stopping, or parking may include nonrenewal of the vehicle license;
- 3 (c) A statement of the specific traffic infraction for which the 4 notice was issued;
- 5 (d) A statement of the monetary penalty established for the traffic 6 infraction;
- 7 (e) A statement of the options provided in this chapter for 8 responding to the notice and the procedures necessary to exercise these 9 options;
- (f) A statement that at any hearing to contest the determination the state has the burden of proving, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the infraction was committed; and that the person may subpoena witnesses including the officer who issued the notice of infraction;
- (g) A statement that at any hearing requested for the purpose of explaining mitigating circumstances surrounding the commission of the infraction the person will be deemed to have committed the infraction and may not subpoena witnesses;
- (h) A statement that the person must respond to the notice as provided in this chapter within fifteen days or the person's driver's license or driving privilege will be suspended by the department until any penalties imposed pursuant to this chapter have been satisfied;

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- (i) A statement that failure to appear at a hearing requested for the purpose of contesting the determination or for the purpose of explaining mitigating circumstances will result in the suspension of the person's driver's license or driving privilege((¬)); or in the case of a standing, stopping, or parking violation, refusal of the department to renew the vehicle license, until any penalties imposed pursuant to this chapter have been satisfied; or in the case of littering—abandoned vehicle, suspension of the person's driver's license, until any penalties imposed under this chapter have been satisfied;
- (j) A statement, which the person shall sign, that the person promises to respond to the notice of infraction in one of the ways provided in this chapter.
- 36 **Sec. 10.** RCW 46.63.110 and 1997 c 331 s 3 are each amended to read 37 as follows:

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- 1 (1) A person found to have committed a traffic infraction shall be
  2 assessed a monetary penalty. No penalty may exceed two hundred and
  3 fifty dollars for each offense unless authorized by this chapter or
  4 title. For the commission of littering--abandoned vehicle under RCW
  5 46.55.105(2), the department shall suspend the driver's license of the
  6 person for ninety days or until all penalties are paid, whichever is
  7 later.
  - (2) The supreme court shall prescribe by rule a schedule of monetary penalties for designated traffic infractions. This rule shall also specify the conditions under which local courts may exercise discretion in assessing fines and penalties for traffic infractions. The legislature respectfully requests the supreme court to adjust this schedule every two years for inflation.

- (3) There shall be a penalty of twenty-five dollars for failure to respond to a notice of traffic infraction except where the infraction relates to parking as defined by local law, ordinance, regulation, or resolution or failure to pay a monetary penalty imposed pursuant to this chapter. A local legislative body may set a monetary penalty not to exceed twenty-five dollars for failure to respond to a notice of traffic infraction relating to parking as defined by local law, ordinance, regulation, or resolution. The local court, whether a municipal, police, or district court, shall impose the monetary penalty set by the local legislative body.
- (4) Monetary penalties provided for in chapter 46.70 RCW which are civil in nature and penalties which may be assessed for violations of chapter 46.44 RCW relating to size, weight, and load of motor vehicles are not subject to the limitation on the amount of monetary penalties which may be imposed pursuant to this chapter.
- (5) Whenever a monetary penalty is imposed by a court under this chapter it is immediately payable. If the person is unable to pay at that time the court may, in its discretion, grant an extension of the period in which the penalty may be paid. If the penalty is not paid on or before the time established for payment the court shall notify the department of the failure to pay the penalty, and the department shall suspend the person's driver's license or driving privilege until the penalty has been paid and the penalty provided in subsection (3) of this section has been paid.
- 38 (6) In addition to any other penalties imposed under this section 39 and not subject to the limitation of subsection (1) of this section, a

- l person found to have committed a traffic infraction shall be assessed
- 2 a fee of five dollars per infraction. Under no circumstances shall
- 3 this fee be reduced or waived. Revenue from this fee shall be
- 4 forwarded to the state treasurer for deposit in the emergency medical
- 5 services and trauma care system trust account under RCW 70.168.040.
- 6 <u>NEW SECTION.</u> **Sec. 11.** The legislature respectfully requests the
- 7 Washington state supreme court to set the fine for littering--abandoned
- 8 vehicle at two hundred fifty dollars.

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