
OLR Bill Analysis

HB 5237

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES.

SUMMARY

This bill makes the following changes to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) statutes:

1. generally subjects records relating to vessels and vessel titles to the privacy protections that apply to personal information in DMV records under existing law, but allows the disclosure of certain information to a vessel owner (§§ 1-5);
2. specifies that “commissioner” refers only to the commissioner or a DMV employee acting on his behalf in several statutes governing background check requirements (§§ 6-8); and
3. requires DMV, before issuing a replacement title, to check the vehicle’s vehicle identification number (VIN) against certain databases (§ 9).

The bill also requires the governor to proclaim the second Monday in July each year as Accessible Parking Awareness Day. He must do so to promote accessible parking’s value, encourage responsible use, and strengthen public education and collaboration. The bill allows suitable exercises to be held in the State Capitol and other locations, as the governor designates, to observe the day (§ 10).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026, except the provisions on background checks and the awareness day are effective upon passage.

§§ 1-5 — VESSEL RECORD PRIVACY

Existing law generally prohibits DMV from disclosing personal information contained in its records unless the disclosure is specifically

authorized by state law. The prohibition applies to records related to any DMV-issued document, including driver's licenses, learner's permits, identity cards, registrations, and title certificates, but current law specifically excludes records relating to vessels or vessel titles. (Although boating and vessel regulation generally falls under the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), DMV handles vessel registration and titles.)

The bill eliminates this exclusion and, in doing so, prohibits DMV from disclosing personal information in vessel-related records unless it is disclosed for a purpose authorized in law. It also (1) expands the circumstances under which disclosure is permitted by allowing DMV to disclose the name and address of the person who last registered a vessel to anyone who proves they currently own it and (2) specifically allows DEEP to do the same.

§§ 6-8 — DEFINITION OF “COMMISSIONER” IN CERTAIN LAWS AUTHORIZING BACKGROUND CHECKS

Generally, for the purposes of motor vehicle laws, the term “commissioner” refers to the DMV commissioner and any assistant to the commissioner who is designated and authorized by the commissioner and is acting for the commissioner under a designation.

The bill specifies that “commissioner” refers only to the DMV commissioner and to DMV employees acting on his behalf for the purposes of statutes on electronic issuance licensees (§ 6), dealer and repairer licensees (§ 7), and driving instructor licensees (§ 8). Each of these sections require applicants to undergo a fingerprint-based national criminal records check. Under P.L. 92-544, the FBI requires state laws requiring national criminal records checks to meet several criteria before the state may receive criminal history record information from the FBI. Among other things, statutes requiring these records checks may not authorize the receipt of criminal history record information by a private entity.

§ 9 — REPLACEMENT TITLES

By law, before issuing an original title certificate, DMV must check

the vehicle's VIN against DMV's title records and its records of stolen, recovered, unclaimed, and abandoned vehicles. (In practice, DMV implemented the National Motor Vehicle Titling Information System, which is a consolidated database of vehicle title information submitted by states that helps identify vehicle fraud and theft.)

The bill additionally requires DMV to run this check before issuing a replacement title certificate.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Transportation Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 36 Nay 0 (03/16/2026)