



Department of the Secretary of State Bureau of Motor Vehicles

Shenna Bellows
Secretary of State

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JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

L.D. 831 “An Act Regarding Abandoned Vehicles Due to Involuntary Psychiatric Hospitalization”

Shenna Bellows, Secretary of State
Department of the Secretary of State, Bureau of Motor Vehicles

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Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Shenna Bellows. I am the Secretary of State and I reside in Manchester. I am providing testimony Neither for Nor Against L.D. 831 “An Act Regarding Abandoned Vehicles Due to Involuntary Psychiatric Hospitalization.”

The towing industry is largely unregulated and Mainers – whether involuntarily hospitalized or not – have raised serious consumer protection concerns. In order to look for a path forward for this industry that better protects Maine vehicle owners, the Bureau of Motor Vehicles is working with Senator Nangle on a bill to call for a working group to bring together industry, law enforcement, consumer protection advocates, and financial institutions to discuss this very issue. The issues raised in L.D. 831 would fit very well in that discussion, and Senator Nangle has agreed it should be a topic of discussion for the working group.

In addition to our suggestion that inclusion of this topic in a study group as the best and most comprehensive path forward, we have concerns with the bill as written. Enactment of this bill would result in the BMV’s Titles Division receiving notice of someone’s hospitalization. We have concerns for the sharing of private medical information with a division which normally would not receive information about a customers’ health.

For these reasons, we think that the working group is the right path forward for this issue at this time. Perhaps the recommended resolution for this specific population and issue will be the one proposed in L.D. 831, but we think it should be discussed more robustly with all relevant interested parties before advancing this bill at this time.

Thank you for your time today and I will be happy to answer any questions.