



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: LD 1010, An Act to Amend the State's Vehicle Inspection Law by Requiring Inspections Biennially

Committee Chair Senator Nangle, Committee Chair Representative Crafts and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation,

1. Thank you for allowing me to bring forth my bill, An Act to Amend the State's Vehicle Inspection Law by Requiring Inspections Biennially.
2. Maine was one of the first states to implement periodic vehicle inspections, starting back in 1930. Of course, almost 100 years ago the number of fatalities per mile driven in a Model T was 8 times higher than what we see in the cars on the road today, engineered and built with modern safety considerations.
3. From 1967-1976, the US Department of Transportation had the ability to withhold funding from states that did not have periodic inspections. In the heyday of that time period, there were 31 states that implemented inspection programs. Since then, the number of states with inspection programs has dropped to less than half of that number (currently there are 37 states with no safety inspection requirements, 5 with biennial safety inspection requirements and 9 with annual safety inspection requirements, including Maine.)
4. From 2015-2019, only 3% of all vehicles involved in a motor vehicle crash had a mechanical defect that was a contributing factor to the crash, and it was not the only singular contributing factor in every one of those crashes. In the same time period, in the State of Maine, that number was 1.75%. Additionally, just because the vehicle had a defect, there is no indication that the vehicle had the defect at the time of the vehicle's last inspection. In other words, the vehicle could have passed a vehicle

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inspection, then had a component failure a week later and that inspection would not have made any difference.

5. According to the 2015 study entitled, Vehicle Safety Inspections by the Government Accountability Office:

“There is little recent empirical research on the relationship between vehicle safety inspection programs and whether these programs reduce crash rates. What is available has generally been unable to establish any causal relationship. Since GAO last conducted a review on vehicle safety inspection programs in 1990, there have been three econometric studies conducted examining the relationship between vehicle inspections and crashes in the U.S. and three studies examining these programs in other countries. Among the three studies of U.S. vehicle inspection programs, none were able to establish a statistically significant effect of safety inspection programs on crashes involving either fatalities or injuries. Specifically, the studies examined crash rates in all 50 states and did not find statistically significant differences in crash rates in states with inspection programs compared to those without. International studies have also not been able to establish a link between safety inspection programs and crash rates involving either fatalities or injuries.”

6. Also cited in the report were the 1989 and 1990 studies, with commentary on both. In regard to the 1989 study it stated that while inspection programs reduced the number of vehicles with mechanical issues, they did not reduce accident rates, and in regard to the 1990 study (a relook at the 1989 data) it stated that it could see no significant difference in accident rates.

7. Additionally, there would be no reason to anticipate an increase in accidents should the inspection program be moved to every other year as the studies show no causal effect. In fact, when New Jersey eliminated their inspection program completely their motor vehicle crash fatalities went down significantly for almost a decade before they began to rise again.

8. We would also likely not see a rise in insurance rates. Data from 2016 show that the average premium for liability insurance in states that did not have any inspections mandates was \$517 per year, compared to \$548 in states with mandatory inspections. The same dataset shows that out of the 10 most expensive states for liability insurance, five have inspections and five don't. Out of the 10 most affordable states for liability insurance, three have inspections and seven don't. Simply put, inspection requirements do not significantly affect insurance rates.

9. Modern cars are more durable, they are more reliable and they are safer. In addition, they come outfitted with a bevy of onboard warning indicators and diagnostic tools that let the owner/operator know-of almost any mechanical defect or potentially unsafe operating condition.

10. Moving the inspection to a biennial basis would save Maine citizens money with no discernible impact on vehicle safety. It would also bring Maine in line with the some of the few other states that still have inspection requirements such as Delaware, Louisiana, Missouri, Rhode Island and West Virginia, all of which have biennial inspections.

11. I encourage the committee to consider this legislation and support it with a vote of 'Ought To Pass'. I thank you for your time and will gladly answer any questions to my ability.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chad R. Perkins", with a stylized, flowing script.

Rep. Chad R. Perkins
District 31

CF:

Committee Chair Senator Nangle
Committee Chair Representative Crafts
Transportation Committee Members

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