



Department of the Secretary of State Bureau of Motor Vehicles

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JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

L.D. 1411 “An Act to Modify the Laws Regarding Driver's License Applications”

Testimony of Shenna Bellows, Secretary of State and
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Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, Members of the Transportation Committee, I am here today to provide testimony in support of L.D. 1411 “An Act to Modify the Laws Regarding Driver's License Applications.”

Moving, especially moving to a new state, can be a hectic, stressful time for any person or family with leases to sign or closings to attend, mail forwarding forms, and all sorts of other paperwork and errands to attend to. One of those checklist items is changing one's valid, unexpired, out-of-state driver's license to a Maine license within 90 days of becoming a Maine resident. In fact, failing to do so could make a new Maine resident subject to a Class E misdemeanor criminal penalty for failing to do so. And yet we know that for individuals and families who move to Maine, going to the BMV to make this transfer isn't always high on the priority list.

L.D. 1411 would change the penalty from the Class E criminal penalty to a traffic infraction with a minimum \$150 fine. A minor criminal infraction can cause serious consequences. A person with a Class E misdemeanor citation or conviction may have to declare that on rental and job applications and find themselves screened out of important life-changing opportunities without even an interview. A class E criminal offense can make a U.S. citizen who travels abroad frequently ineligible for “trusted traveler” programs such as Global Entry.

And for non-citizens such as international students, Maine's law is out of line with international law, which allows them to drive legally in the U.S. for up to one year using their valid, unexpired licenses issued in their home countries, if they also have a valid International Driving Permit. These students shouldn't be potentially subject to criminal penalties for following international law.

L.D. 1411 also amends the current statute to eliminate an unnecessary and inefficient Social Security Administration letter requirement. Social Security laws already delineate who is and is not eligible for a Social Security Number. The BMV can and should rely on the law, rather than requiring a letter in all cases stating that someone is ineligible for an SSN. In some cases, a letter might still be required, and the language change proposed here would not preclude the BMV from getting that if necessary. Overall, this change would increase accuracy and efficiency for BMV staff and our customers alike.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on L.D. 1411. If the committee has any questions, I'd be more than happy to answer them or conduct the appropriate research.