

SUBJECT: Authorizing interactive access to driving records

COMMITTEE: Public Safety — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 9 ayes — Oakley, Bailey, Allen, Carter, Driver, Edwards, Luna, Madden,
McCoulskey

0 nays

WITNESSES: On — James G. Templeton, Texas Department of Public Safety

BACKGROUND: The National Driver Register (NDR) provides a service that permits state driver licensing officials to check driving records to protect the public from errant drivers.

DIGEST: CSHB 2543 would authorize the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to establish a separate system from DPS's mainframe computer to allow interactive access to certain driver information. Two levels of service would be authorized.

The first level of service would provide the driver's name, address, and current license status for a fee of \$2.50. The second level of service would provide the status information plus a listing of traffic law convictions and accident involvements for the past three years for a fee of \$4.50. Fifty cents of each fee collected would be deposited to a DPS fund to administer the program and the remaining fees would be deposited to the general revenue fund. The DPS could contract with vendors to implement this program.

The bill would also allow the DPS to process NDR file check requests for a fee of \$4.00 for current or prospective employers of persons employed or seeking employment as motor vehicle or railway locomotive operators, provided the individual gave consent and was licensed in this state. The bill would also require that the DPS assist and establish a reasonable fee for people who wish to obtain NDR information on themselves.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

The interactive access to driving record program created by CSHB 2543 would allow public information to be accessed by anyone and could increase safety on the roads. Interactive access to driving records programs have been implemented in California and Florida. These programs have successfully allowed rental companies to check the driving status of a prospective renter and have reduced accidents and theft for these companies.

The revenue gain to the general revenue fund would amount to \$3.6 million annually, and the DPS would gain more than \$450,000 a year according to the fiscal note.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

No apparent opposition

NOTES:

The substitute would allow the DPS to enter into contracts with private vendors to implement the access to driving records service. In addition, the substitute would set forth that NDR information could only be sought by an employer for motor vehicle or railway locomotive operators and would specifically require the DPS to adopt procedures whereby individuals could access NDR information on themselves.