

SUBJECT: Interchangeable license plates on antique cars and trucks

COMMITTEE: Transportation — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 8 ayes — Alexander, Siebert, Edwards, Hartnett, Hawley, Hill, Pickett, Uher
0 nays
1 absent — Finnell

WITNESSES: For — None
Against — None
On — Jim Bisson, Texas Department of Transportation

BACKGROUND : Antique cars, trucks and motorcycles that are at least 25 years old, collectors' items, and used exclusively for special events are permitted to carry special license plates. They may use either plates issued by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) that indicate their antique status or plates that were issued in Texas for that particular type of vehicle in the same year as the model year of the vehicle, contingent on TxDOT approval.

DIGEST: HB 344 would require TxDOT to approve for use on antique cars or trucks any Texas license plate issued in the model year of the vehicle, regardless of the kind of vehicle for which the plate was originally issued.

HB 344 would take immediate effect if finally approved by a two-thirds record vote of the membership in each house.

SUPPORTERS SAY: HB 344 would allow TxDOT to approve antique license plates that could be used interchangeably for either cars or trucks. This would help antique vehicle collectors in Texas ensure the historical accuracy — and thus the value — of their collections. Many owners of antique vehicles spend a great deal of time, effort and money to make their vehicles historically accurate in every detail, down to the license plates that the vehicle originally carried. However, antique plates are increasingly difficult to find and expensive to purchase. The difficulties that confront collectors are exacerbated by the

current statute that allows an antique vehicle to use an antique plate only if it was originally issued to the same type of vehicle being licensed. Such a requirement serves no useful purpose; it only makes it very difficult for Texas antique vehicle owners to procure historically accurate plates.

Antique vehicles are often sought out for use in period movies; having a license plate from the same era as the vehicle makes a vehicle more marketable for such uses.

By law, antique vehicles cannot be used for transportation but only for exhibitions, club activities, parades and other public functions. An antique car plate on an antique truck — or vice versa — would not cause any confusion for traffic police.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

No apparent opposition