

SUBJECT: Relating to drivers' licenses, release of information, and payment of fees

COMMITTEE: Public Safety — favorable, with amendment

VOTE: 9 ayes — B. Turner, Keel, Berman, Driver, Gutierrez, Hupp, Isett, P. King, Villarreal

0 nays

0 absent

WITNESSES: For — None

Against — None

On — Frank Elder, Texas Department of Public Safety

BACKGROUND: In 1999, the 76th Legislature amended Transportation Code, secs. 521.103 and 521.274 to allow a person to renew a driver's license or identification certificate with the Department of Public Safety (DPS) via mail, telephone, Internet or other electronic means. DPS subsequently adopted rules for renewal under these sections, which require a written request and a fee for the release of information to the license holder.

DIGEST: HB 1762, as amended, would amend the Transportation Code to allow licensed drivers to submit a request for information or to apply for a duplicate license or identification certificate via mail, telephone, Internet, or other electronic means. DPS would adopt rules determining eligibility for the release of information. The updated rules could not conflict with any other law relating to the release of information.

HB 1762 would amend the Government Code to authorize DPS to adopt rules regarding payment for DPS information in person, via mail, telephone, Internet, electronic transfer, or credit card. The bill would permit DPS to charge a fee for a payment transaction or service charge.

The bill would strike the requirement that a person applying for a corrected license or certificate prove that the license or certificate was lost or destroyed.

HB 1762 would take effect September 1, 2001.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

HB 1762 would give DPS additional opportunities to conduct business as well as bringing the agency up to date with technological advances. It would greatly increase the efficiency of the license section and would provide the public with additional and more convenient avenues for contacting DPS. Current law resulted from last session's DPS sunset bill and was intended to minimize inconvenience to the public and maximize departmental efficiency. This bill would enhance those efforts further.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

Allowing license holders to make requests, which require a full name, date of birth, and driver's license number, via the Internet could create problems regarding privacy and personal safety. The Internet is not secure enough to be conducting transactions of a financial or informational nature.

NOTES:

The committee amendment would allow the holder of an identification certificate to apply for a duplicate certificate via mail, telephone, Internet, or other electronic means.