

SUBJECT: Motor vehicle registration requirements for active duty military personnel

COMMITTEE: Transportation — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 10 ayes — Phillips, Martinez, Burkett, Y. Davis, Fletcher, Guerra,  
Harper-Brown, Lavender, McClendon, Pickett

0 nays

1 absent — Riddle

WITNESSES: For — None

Against — None

On — Randy Elliston, Texas Department of Motor Vehicles

BACKGROUND: Transportation Code, sec. 502.090 governs the effect of certain military service on the motor vehicle registration requirement. This section applies to vehicles owned by Texas residents on active duty in the U.S. armed forces, who are stationed in or have been assigned to another nation under military orders, and who hold a vehicle registration or license that is issued under a branch of the U.S. armed forces or the nation where the person is stationed or assigned.

For these vehicles, the registration or license issued by the armed forces or host nation remains valid for up to 90 days after the vehicle returns to the state and the regular 30-day limit under Transportation Code, sec. 502.040 does not apply for registering a vehicle after purchasing a vehicle or becoming a state resident.

Transportation Code, sec. 502.040(a) requires the owner of a motor vehicle, trailer, or semitrailer to apply for the registration of the vehicle within 30 days of purchase or becoming a state resident, each registration year in which the vehicle is or was to be used on a public highway, and for the remaining portion of the registration year if the vehicle is unregistered for a registration year that has begun.

Transportation Code, sec. 502.091, allows vehicles with current

registration in another state to be exempt from payment of registration fees in Texas if the other state grants reciprocal exemptions to Texas residents.

**DIGEST:**

HB 3379 would specify that the registration renewal provisions and the 30-day requirement for registering a motor vehicle after becoming a resident of the state or purchasing a vehicle under sec. 502.040(a) of Transportation Code did not apply to a person who:

- was a Texas resident;
- was on active duty in the U.S. armed forces; and
- was stationed in or assigned to another state or nation under military orders on the date the person's registration renewal became due.

A vehicle that was stored or parked in a lawful manner on private property and was temporarily exempt from registration under the provisions of HB 3379 would not be considered a public nuisance or a junked or abandoned vehicle under Transportation Code, sec. 683.074 and sec. 683.0765.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

HB 3379 would help take the pressure off active duty military while they focused on their service outside the state. The bill would particularly help resolve issues with vehicles left in the state by active duty members of the U.S. armed forces while they were stationed in another state or country on the date their registration renewal became due. The bill would make it easier for military personnel to renew their vehicle registration when they returned from service, rather than having to take their focus off their service to handle registration renewal while on duty.

The bill would ensure that vehicles owned by active military personnel that were stored and parked on private property in a lawful manner would not be declared abandoned or junked in their absence.

**OPPONENTS  
SAY:**

This bill is unnecessary. Current law already makes it easy for active military personnel to register in the state by providing a 30-day registration grace period for all new Texans and a 90-day registration grace period for registration renewal and new registration for active military personnel who return to the state with a valid registration or license issued by the armed forces or their host nation. Active duty military personnel serving outside the state do not have to register their vehicles in Texas if their registration is already current in another state.