

SUBJECT:	Authorizing use of visual signals for certain vehicles
COMMITTEE:	Transportation — favorable, without amendment
VOTE:	11 ayes — Canales, Raney, Ashby, Davis, Gamez, Caroline Harris, Lozano, Lujan, Ordaz, Perez, Romero 0 nays 2 absent — Landgraf, Patterson
WITNESSES:	For — J.R. Woolley, Justices of the Peace and Constables Association Against — None
BACKGROUND:	Some have suggested that adding emergency lights to medical examiner or justice of the peace vehicles could allow medical examiners and justices of the peace to more efficiently respond to the scene of a fatality.
DIGEST:	HB 2616 would authorize medical examiner vehicles and vehicles operated by a justice of the peace to be equipped with either: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a mounted signal lamp that complied with certain requirements; or• a signal lamp that was temporarily attached to the roof of the vehicle and flashed red and blue lights that visible at a distance of at least 500 feet in normal sunlight. An operator of a medical examiner vehicle or a justice of the peace vehicle would only be permitted to use the lighting equipment described when: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• it was necessary to warn other vehicle operators or pedestrians of the vehicle's approach; and• operating the vehicle in the course and normal scope of the operator's duties relating to an inquest.

HB 2616 would require drivers to follow protocol designated for authorized emergency vehicles when approached by medical examiner vehicles and vehicles being operated by a justice of the peace lawfully using visual signals.

This bill would take effect September 1, 2023