

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 557
By: Armbrister
State Affairs
2-18-97
As Filed

DIGEST

Currently, the Texas Department of Transportation is prohibited from issuing an exempt license plate unless the vehicle has the agency name printed in the side of the vehicle. However, Sections 721.003 and 721.005, Transportation Code, exempt certain governmental agency vehicles from the inscription requirements.

This bill would clarify the department's authorization to issue regular plates to law enforcement and other agencies that are exempt from the inscription requirements under Sections 721.003 or 721.005, Transportation Code.

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.B. 557 to establish certain requirements for the issuance of exempt license plates.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is granted to the Texas Department of Transportation in SECTION 1 (Secs. 502.201(d) and (g), Transportation Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 502.201, Transportation Code, to require the Texas Department of Transportation (department), by rule, to provide for the issuance of specially designated license plates for vehicles that are exempt by law. Requires the license plates to bear the word "exempt," except as provided by Subsection (g). Provides that a person who operates on a public highway a vehicle after the registration, rather than license, has been revoked is liable for the penalties for failing to register a vehicle. Requires the department to provide, by rule, for the issuance of regularly designed license plates not bearing the word "exempt" for a vehicle that is exempt by law under certain circumstances.

SECTION 2. Amends Chapter 502E, Transportation Code, by adding Section 502.2015, as follows:

Sec. 502.2015. LIMITATION ON ISSUANCE OF EXEMPT LICENSE PLATES; SEIZURE OF CERTAIN VEHICLES. Prohibits the department from issuing exempt license plates for a vehicle owned by the United States, this state, or a political subdivision of this state unless certain events occur when application is made for registration of the vehicle. Prohibits the department from issuing exempt license plates for a vehicle owned by a person other than the United States, this state, or a political subdivision of this state unless, when application is made for registration of the vehicle, the proper authority certifies in writing to the department that the name of the owner of the vehicle is printed on the vehicle in a certain manner. Authorizes a peace officer listed in Article 2.12, Code of Criminal Procedure, to seize a motor vehicle displaying exempt license plates under certain conditions. Authorizes a peace officer who seizes a motor vehicle to require the vehicle to be handled in a certain manner. Requires the owner of the vehicle, in order to obtain the release of the vehicle, to perform certain functions. Provides that Subsections (a) and (b) do not apply to a vehicle to which Section 502.201(g) or 502.206 applies. Defines "exempt license plate."

SECTION 3. (a) Provides that this Act conforms the Transportation Code to the changes made by Chapter 453, Acts of the 74th Legislature, Regular Session, 1995.

(b) Repealer: Article 6675a-3aa, V.T.C.S., (Specifically Designated Plates for Exempt Vehicles).

(c) Provides that this Act prevails over another Act of the 75th Legislature, Regular Session, 1997, relating to nonsubstantive additions to and corrections in enacted codes.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 1997.

SECTION 5. Emergency clause.