

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1137
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Law Enforcement
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Currently, a number of Texans working for multinational corporations are stationed overseas for long periods of time for work-related purposes and are finding it difficult to secure foreign driver's licenses. With the passage of C.S.H.B. 1137, the Department of Public Safety (the department) would be authorized to enter into an agreement with a foreign country whereby Texans 18 years or older would be able to receive an equivalent driver's license issued by that country upon presentation of their Class C Texas licenses. Nonresidents would be similarly able to present a foreign driver's license in order to procure a Texas license. The bill provides that the department may only enter into such a reciprocity agreement if it determines that the foreign country has similar motor vehicle laws, ordinances, and administrative rules.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1137 adds Section 521.0305 to the Transportation Code to provide that the department may enter into an agreement with a foreign country under which a person who is 18 years of age or older and who holds a driver's license issued by that country that is similar to a Class C driver's license issued by the state of Texas may receive a Class C Texas license issued in a priority manner; and a person 18 years of age or older who holds a Class C driver's license issued under this chapter may receive a similar driver's license issued in a priority manner from the foreign country. The bill authorizes the department to enter into such an agreement only if both Texas and the foreign country enter into the agreement and the department determines that the foreign country's motor vehicle laws, ordinances, and administrative rules and regulations are similar to those of this state. Before a person who is not a United States citizen can receive a driver's license under this section, the person must present to the department documentation issued by the U.S. agency responsible for citizenship and immigration that the person is authorized to be in the U.S.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon passage, or, if the Act does not receive the necessary vote, the Act takes effect September 1, 2005.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

The original bill allowed reciprocity for Class A driver's licenses. This was a drafting error as the bill is intended to affect Class C licenses only. C.S.H.B. replaces references to Class A licenses with references to Class C licenses. The substitute adds a new Section 521.0305(c) that provides that a foreign citizen must show proof that the person is authorized to be in the United States by the responsible federal agency before a Texas driver's license can be issued under this section.