

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 588
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Homeland Security & Public Safety
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Currently, under the driver responsibility program, there is no option for advance payment of the surcharge, which is assessed over 36 months. Notifying the person of the amount the person will owe over the 36-month period, coupled with an advanced payment option, would provide an opportunity for the person to make an informed decision about making a single up-front payment. H.B. 588 provides for the advance payment of surcharges under the driver responsibility program.

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

H.B. 588 amends the Transportation Code to require the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to offer an option for a single up-front payment to a person who is assessed an annual surcharge under the driver responsibility program to allow the person to pay in advance the total amount that will be owed for the 36-month period for which the surcharge will be assessed. The bill requires the notice of an initial surcharge imposed under the program to notify the driver's license holder of the total amount the person will owe for the 36-month period for which the surcharge will be assessed and the availability of such an advance payment option. The bill establishes that if a person makes a single up-front payment in the amount specified in the notice and the person is not, in the 36-month period for which the person made the up-front payment, subsequently convicted of an offense requiring a surcharge or an increase in the amount due to DPS, the department is not required to take any further action under provisions relating to a driver's license points surcharge or surcharges for certain convictions and license suspensions, as applicable, or to annually notify the person of the assessment of the surcharge.

H.B. 588 makes its provisions applicable to any total surcharge amounts owed by a person for a 36-month period under the driver responsibility program, regardless of whether the initial annual surcharge was assessed before, on, or after the effective date of the bill.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2011.