

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1757
By: Uresti
Transportation
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties assert that the use of license plate flippers in some areas of Texas has come to the attention of law enforcement officials. The parties report that these devices, whether home-made or manufactured and purchased online, are designed to allow an individual to rotate or flip between two license plates within a matter of seconds through the push of a button or the pull of a cord. Under Texas law, it is illegal to have false or obscured license plates showing on a vehicle, but it is not currently illegal to possess a license plate flipper and operate a vehicle with false license plates that are not showing. The parties express concern that a license plate flipper would allow a criminal to evade law enforcement by hindering the ability of law enforcement to identify a vehicle. S.B. 1757 seeks to address this concern.

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

S.B. 1757 amends the Transportation Code to make it a Class B misdemeanor offense to purchase or possess, with criminal negligence, a license plate flipper, defined as a manual, electronic, or mechanical device designed or adapted to be installed on a motor vehicle and switch between two or more license plates for the purpose of allowing a motor vehicle operator to change the license plate displayed on the operator's vehicle or hide a license plate from view by flipping the license plate so that the license plate number is not visible. The bill makes it a Class A misdemeanor offense to manufacture, sell, offer to sell, or otherwise distribute, with criminal negligence, a license plate flipper.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2013.