

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2478
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Homeland Security & Public Safety
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Recent reports indicate that wait times in driver's license offices have increased in Texas due to rapid population growth and fewer available customer service representatives, whose turnover rates remain high. It has been suggested that this combination of factors has made it difficult to maintain and improve wait times. C.S.H.B. 2478 seeks to shorten these wait times and improve efficiency by authorizing the Department of Public Safety to contract with a private vendor to process various driver's license transactions, extending the duration of a commercial driver's license and traditional driver's license, and increasing certain related fees.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

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. 2478 amends the Transportation Code to authorize the Department of Public Safety (DPS), for purposes of the program regarding the provision of renewal and duplicate driver's license and other identification certificate services, to enter into an agreement with a private vendor to permit vendor employees to provide services at a location determined by the vendor relating to the issuance of renewal and duplicate driver's licenses, election identification certificates, and personal identification certificates. The bill requires a participating private vendor to remit to DPS fees collected for the issuance of a renewal or duplicate driver's license or personal identification certificate. The bill includes a private vendor that provides services under such an agreement among the entities that provide such services that may collect an additional fee for each transaction provided that relates to driver's license and personal identification certificate services only and raises the cap on the fee from \$5 to \$10.

C.S.H.B. 2478 extends, with certain exceptions, the expiration dates of an original and renewal driver's license by two years, as applicable, and increases the fee for issuance or renewal of a driver's license from \$24 to \$32.

C.S.H.B. 2478 increases the fee for an applicable commercial driver's license issued by DPS from \$60 to \$96 and sets the fee for the issuance of such a license with a hazardous materials endorsement issued by DPS at \$60, with certain exceptions. The bill extends, with certain exceptions, the expiration date of the following commercial driver's licenses by three years and provides for the applicable expiration dates for those licenses with a hazardous materials endorsement:

- an original commercial driver's license; and
- a commercial driver's license issued to a person holding a Texas Class A, B, C, or M license:
 - that would expire one year or more after the date of issuance of the commercial driver's license;
 - that would expire less than one year after the date of issuance of the commercial driver's license or that has been expired for less than one year; or
 - that has been expired for at least one year but not more than two years.

C.S.H.B. 2478 extends, with certain exceptions, the optional expiration of a non-domiciled commercial driver's license other than a temporary non-domiciled commercial driver's license by three years. The bill extends, with certain exceptions, the expiration date for the renewal of a commercial driver's license as follows:

- by three years for a renewal that has been expired for less than one year; and
- by one year for a renewal that has been expired for at least one year but not more than two years.

The bill provides for the expiration date of the renewal of such licenses with a hazardous materials endorsement.

C.S.H.B. 2478 applies only to a driver's license or commercial driver's license issued or renewed on or after June 1, 2020.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2019.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 2478 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute:

- changes the way the expiration date for certain original driver's licenses is calculated; and
- includes provisions extending the expiration date for certain renewed driver's licenses.

The substitute raises from \$5 to \$10 the cap on the additional fee that a county or municipality providing services under a program agreement may collect for each transaction provided that relates to driver's license and personal identification certificate services only.

The substitute does not repeal the provision prohibiting the public safety director from waiving the required driving test for an applicant for a driver's license who is under 18 years of age.