

By: Hughes, et al.  
(Martinez)

S.B. No. 976

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the notification of a peace officer through an indication associated with vehicle registration that a person has a health condition or disability that may impede effective communication.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter B, Chapter 502, Transportation Code, is amended by adding Section 502.061 to read as follows:

Sec. 502.061. REGISTRATION BY OWNER WITH CONDITION THAT IMPEDES EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION. (a) An application for registration must provide space for the applicant to voluntarily indicate that the applicant has a health condition or disability that may impede effective communication with a peace officer. The department may request from a person who makes an indication under this subsection verification of a condition in the form of:

(1) for a physical health condition, a written statement from a licensed physician; or

(2) for a mental health condition, a written statement from a licensed physician, a licensed psychologist, or a non-physician mental health professional, as defined by Section 571.003, Health and Safety Code.

(b) The department shall provide to the Department of Public Safety the vehicle registration information of a person who voluntarily indicated on an application under Subsection (a) that

1 the person has a health condition or disability that may impede  
2 effective communication. The department may not provide to the  
3 Department of Public Safety information that shows the type of  
4 health condition or disability a person has.

5 (c) The Department of Public Safety shall establish a system  
6 to include information received under Subsection (b) in the Texas  
7 Law Enforcement Telecommunications System for the purpose of  
8 alerting a peace officer who makes a traffic stop that the operator  
9 of the stopped vehicle may have a health condition or disability  
10 that may impede effective communication.

11 (d) The Department of Public Safety may not make information  
12 received under Subsection (b) available in the Texas Law  
13 Enforcement Telecommunications System to a person who has access to  
14 the system under a contract unless the contract prohibits the  
15 person from disclosing that information to a person who is not  
16 subject to the contract.

17 (e) The department may not issue to a person without the  
18 person's consent a license plate with a visible marking that  
19 indicates to the general public that the person voluntarily  
20 indicated on an application under Subsection (a) that the person  
21 has a health condition or disability that may impede effective  
22 communication.

23 (f) Except as provided by Subsection (d), information  
24 supplied to the department relating to an applicant's health  
25 condition or disability is for the confidential use of the  
26 department and the Department of Public Safety and may not be  
27 disclosed to any person.

1           SECTION 2. A Department of Public Safety contract that  
2 allows a person to access the Texas Law Enforcement  
3 Telecommunications System and that is in effect before the  
4 effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect on the  
5 date on which the contract was entered into, and that law is  
6 continued in effect for that purpose, except that the contract:

7                   (1) continues only for the term of the contract; and

8                   (2) may not be renewed unless the renewed contract  
9 includes the prohibition required by Section 502.061(d),  
10 Transportation Code, as added by this Act.

11           SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.