

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
88R4343 DIO-F

S.B. 1281
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State Affairs
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The "Failure to Appear/ Pay Program," also referred to as the "OmniBase Program," prevents or suspends the renewal of a person's driver's license until all of a person's outstanding court fines and fees are paid in full.

The result of the program has led to Texans being unable to legally drive, not due to dangerous driving behavior, but simply due to unpaid debt, which is most often for traffic tickets. When people cannot drive their ability to obtain and keep employment suffers dramatically. Many continue to drive, which results in more tickets and trapping people who are already struggling with poverty in an endless cycle of debt.

S.B. 1281 would repeal the Failure to Appear/ Pay Program, allowing Texans the ability to settle their fines and fees without being caught up in a debt cycle.

As proposed, S.B. 1281 amends current law relating to prohibiting the denial of a driver's license renewal for failure to appear in court, failure to pay a fine or cost, or failure to satisfy a judgment.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority previously granted to the Department of Public Safety of the State of Texas is rescinded in SECTION 2 (Section 706.012, Transportation Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 133.124, Local Government Code, as follows:

Sec. 133.124. ALLOCATION OF FEES TO TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATIVE FEE ACCOUNT. Deletes existing text authorizing money in the account to be appropriated only to the Department of Public Safety of the State of Texas (DPS) to defray the administrative costs associated with implementing Chapter 706 (Denial of Renewal of License for Failure to Appear), Transportation Code.

SECTION 2. Repealer: Section 521.317 (Denial of License After Warning), Transportation Code.

Repealer: Section 521.3452(b) (relating to authorizing DPS to deny renewal of the person's driver's license under certain statutes), Transportation Code.

Repealer: Chapter 706 (Denial of Renewal of License for Failure to Appear), Transportation Code.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2023.