By:  Canales H.B. No. 2413

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the renewal, expiration, and suspension of driver's licenses.

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

SECTION 1.  Subchapter M, Chapter 521, Transportation Code, is amended by adding Section 521.2719 to read as follows:

Sec. 521.2719.  EXPIRED LICENSES. (a) A person may renew an expired driver's license if the person's license has not been expired for more than 10 years.

(b)  A person whose driver's license has been expired for more than 10 years may obtain a new driver's license by complying with the requirements and procedures for obtaining an original driver's license.

SECTION 2.  Chapter 706, Transportation Code, is amended by adding Section 706.0045 to read as follows:

Sec. 706.0045.  PERIOD OF DENIAL OF RENEWAL OF DRIVER'S LICENSE. (a) Notwithstanding Section 706.004(a) or 706.006(c), the department may deny renewal of a person's driver's license under this chapter only until the earlier of:

(1)  the date the department receives a clearance notice under Section 706.005;

(2)  the first anniversary of the date that both of the following become true:

(i)  the person's license has expired, and

(ii)  the department or a vendor described by Subsection (b) has received notice under this chapter that there was cause to deny renewal of the person's driver's license; or

(3)  The department has determined that the person is indigent under section 706.0046 of this chapter; or

(4)  A court having jurisdiction over the underlying offense makes a determination that the person is indigent as described by Section 706.006(d).

(b)  This subsection applies only if the department contracts with a vendor under Section 706.008 to implement this chapter. Each month, the vendor shall:

(1)  identify each person whose license may no longer be denied renewal because of the expiration of the time period described by Subsection (a)(2); and

(2)  provide the name of each person identified under Subdivision (1) to:

(A)  the department; and

(B)  the applicable court in which the person failed to appear based on a complaint or citation or failed to pay or satisfy a judgment ordering the payment of a fine and cost in the manner ordered by the court in a matter involving an offense described by Section 706.002(a).

SECTION 3.  Section 706.005, Transportation Code, is amended by amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (c) to read as follows:

(a)  A political subdivision shall immediately notify the department that there is no cause to continue to deny renewal of a person's driver's license based on the person's previous failure to appear or failure to pay or satisfy a judgment ordering the payment of a fine and cost in the manner ordered by the court in a matter involving an offense described by Section 706.002(a), on payment of a reimbursement fee, or on a finding by the court that the person is indigent and not required to pay a reimbursement fee, as provided by Section 706.006 and:

(1)  the perfection of an appeal of the case for which the warrant of arrest was issued or judgment arose;

(2)  the dismissal of the charge for which the warrant of arrest was issued or judgment arose, other than a dismissal with prejudice by motion of the appropriate prosecuting attorney for lack of evidence;

(3)  the posting of bond or the giving of other security to reinstate the charge for which the warrant was issued;

(4)  the payment or discharge of the fine and cost owed on an outstanding judgment of the court; [~~or~~]

(5)  if the person's license is denied renewal solely because of the person's previous failure to appear, the person's appearance in court in any manner authorized by law for the underlying offense for which the person previously failed to appear; or

(6)  any other [~~suitable~~] arrangement to satisfy [~~pay~~] the fine and cost within the court's discretion, including any instance in which the person enters into an arrangement with the court to satisfy the fine and cost under a payment plan or by performing community service.

(c)  A political subdivision that notifies the department that there is no cause to continue to deny renewal of a person's driver's license under Subsection (a) may notify the department if the court subsequently determines the person failed to complete an arrangement to satisfy the fine and cost under Subsection (a)(6), including failure to complete payment plan installments or failure to complete community service. On receiving the necessary information from the political subdivision under this subsection, the department may deny renewal of the person's driver's license.

SECTION 4.  Chapter 706, Transportation Code, is amended by adding Section 706.0046 to read as follows:

706.0046. INDIGENCY PROGRAM. The department shall develop and implement an indigency program, through which people who have been denied renewal under this chapter may renew their licenses if they provide proof to the department that they are indigent. A person may prove that they are indigent under this section by providing evidence to the department that their annual net income is less than 125 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, as defined annually by the United States Department of Health and Human Services. A person who is found to be indigent under this program may not be denied renewal under this Chapter.

SECTION 5.  (a) Sections 521.2719 and 521.421(l), Transportation Code, as added by this Act, apply only to an application for a renewal driver's license that is submitted on or after the effective date of this Act. An application that is submitted before the effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect when the application was submitted, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

(b)  Section 706.0045 and 706.0046, Transportation Code, as added by this Act, applies to a determination to deny renewal of a driver's license that is made by the Department of Public Safety of the State of Texas before, on, or after the effective date of this Act.

SECTION 6.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.