

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
89R1754 BEE-D

H.B. 1607  
By: Metcalf et al. (Flores)  
Criminal Justice  
5/22/2025  
Engrossed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

H.B. 1607 would allow a person to operate their vehicle with one license plate located on the rear of their vehicle if the manufacturer does not include a bracket on the front of the vehicle. The vehicle must display a windshield insignia issued by the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV) if a front license plate is not displayed. The driver must be in possession of the front license plate when operating the vehicle if it is not displayed.

The TxDMV would still issue two license plates to motor vehicle owners. The owner of the vehicle would only be required to display one plate on the rear of their vehicle if no bracket was included by the manufacturer.

Under current state law, owners of cars and light trucks are required to display two license plates on the front and back of their vehicle.

Twenty-one states, including all of our border states, already do not require you to place a license plate on the front of a vehicle, and many cars today do not come with a spot on the front bumper to affix a plate.

This forces vehicle owners to drill holes in their bumpers in order to avoid receiving a citation. Often, this causes thousands of dollars in damage not only to the exterior of the vehicle but destroys the sensors and cameras now found in newer vehicles.

H.B. 1607 amends current law relating to license plates and license plate windshield insignia issued for and displayed on a vehicle, authorizes a fee, and creates a criminal offense.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles in SECTION 2 (Section 504.011, Transportation Code) of this bill.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Section 504.010, Transportation Code, by amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (d), as follows:

(a) Requires an applicant for motor vehicle registration, on payment of the prescribed fee, to be issued a license plate or set of plates, provided that the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV) is required to issue a set of two plates to an applicant for registration of a passenger car or light truck.

(d) Requires that the rules adopted under Subsection (c) (relating to rules regarding the placement of license plates for certain vehicles):

(1) authorize a passenger car or light truck to display only a rear license plate if the motor vehicle is not equipped by the manufacturer with an exterior front feature to which a license plate may be fastened without drilling through the exterior of the vehicle; and

- (2) require a vehicle that displays only a rear license plate under Subdivision (1) to display a license plate windshield insignia.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 504, Transportation Code, by adding Section 504.011, as follows:

Sec. 504.011. ISSUANCE AND PLACEMENT OF LICENSE PLATE WINDSHIELD INSIGNIA. (a) Requires TxDMV to issue a license plate windshield insignia to an applicant for registration of a passenger car or light truck if:

- (1) the applicant applies for the license plate windshield insignia in the form and manner prescribed by TxDMV and pays the prescribed fee for the license plate windshield insignia; and

- (2) the passenger car or light truck is not equipped by the manufacturer with an exterior front feature to which a license plate may be fastened without drilling through the exterior of the vehicle.

(b) Authorizes TxDMV by rule to prescribe the manner and form of an application for a license plate windshield insignia, establish a reasonable fee for a license plate windshield insignia in an amount necessary to cover the costs of administering this section, and determine the information and documentation required to demonstrate eligibility for a license plate windshield insignia.

(c) Requires TxDMV by rule to prescribe the form of the license plate windshield insignia and the manner in which the license plate windshield insignia is required to be displayed. Requires that rules adopted under this subsection require that a license plate windshield insignia issued under this section show the same information that is required to be shown on the license plate issued for the vehicle and be displayed in the interior of the vehicle's front windshield.

(d) Requires the operator of a passenger car or light truck that displays a license plate windshield insignia issued under this section and only a rear license plate to have in the operator's possession while operating the vehicle the unmounted license plate issued for the vehicle under Section 504.010(a) and at the request of a peace officer, produce for inspection the unmounted license plate issued for the vehicle under Section 504.010(a).

SECTION 3. Amends the heading to Section 504.943, Transportation Code, to read as follows:

Sec. 504.943. OPERATION OF VEHICLE WITHOUT REQUIRED LICENSE PLATE OR LICENSE PLATE WINDSHIELD INSIGNIA.

SECTION 4. Amends Section 504.943, Transportation Code, by amending Subsections (a) and (d) and adding Subsections (a-1), (d-1), and (f), as follows:

(a) Provides that a person, rather than a person except as provided by Subsection (b) (relating to an offense a person commits if the person operates certain vehicles on public highways without displaying a license plate that meets certain criteria), commits an offense if the person operates on a public highway, during a registration period, a vehicle that does not display all, rather than a motor vehicle that does not display two, license plates and any license plate windshield insignia required by Chapter 504 (License Plates) or a rule adopted under this chapter to be displayed on the vehicle that have been assigned by TxDMV for the period and comply with TxDMV rules regarding the placement of license plates and license plate windshield insignia.

(a-1) Provides that a person commits an offense if the person operates on a public highway a passenger car or light truck that displays a license plate windshield insignia and only a rear license plate and the unmounted license plate issued for the vehicle under Section 504.010(a) is not in the person's possession or the person fails to produce for

inspection, on the request of a peace officer, the unmounted license plate issued for the vehicle under Section 504.010(a).

(d) Authorizes a court to dismiss a charge brought under Subsection (a), rather than (a)(1) (relating to license plates that have been assigned by TxDMV), if the defendant meets certain criteria.

(d-1) Authorizes a court to dismiss a charge brought under Subsection (a-1) if the defendant produces in court the unmounted license plate issued for the vehicle under Section 504.010(a) and pays a reimbursement fee not to exceed \$10.

(f) Prohibits a peace officer from stopping a motor vehicle or detaining the operator of a motor vehicle solely to enforce Subsection (a-1) if the vehicle displays a license plate windshield insignia that has been assigned by TxDMV for the registration period and complies with TxDMV rules regarding the placement of the license plate windshield insignia.

SECTION 5. Repealer: Section 504.943(b) (relating to an offense a person commits if the person operate certain vehicles on public highways without displaying a license plate that meets certain criteria), Transportation Code.

SECTION 6. Makes application of this Act prospective.

SECTION 7. Effective date: September 1, 2025.