

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1598
By: Hagenbuch
Transportation
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Motor vehicle collision reports can serve a critical role in insurance claims, law enforcement investigations, and public safety initiatives. The bill sponsor has informed the committee, however, that concerns over privacy and data security have led to restrictions on the dissemination of personal information in these reports. S.B. 1598 seeks to balance the need to expand public access to collision records with the need to protect sensitive personal information by clarifying the information that government entities are authorized to disclose to law enforcement agencies, expanding the list of entities eligible to request and receive collision reports, and strengthening privacy protections relating to the disclosure of these reports.

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

S.B. 1598 amends the Transportation Code to expand the purposes for which certain confidential motor vehicle collision report information held by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) may be used by an agency of the United States, Texas, or a local government of Texas to include a criminal investigation conducted by a law enforcement agency. The bill revises provisions relating to the release of collision information as follows:

- under the requirement for TxDOT or the applicable governmental entity to release the information on written request and payment of any required fee to the law enforcement agency that employs the peace officer who investigated the collision and sent the information to TxDOT, expands the applicability of individuals under the purview of the law enforcement agency covered under the requirement from an agent of the agency authorized by contract to any person acting on behalf of the agency who is so authorized; and
- authorizes a governmental entity holding the applicable collision report information to release, in addition to the information required to be released by TxDOT or the governmental entity, a vehicle identification number and specific collision information relating to that vehicle to a person who is acting on behalf of a law enforcement agency specified previously and who is authorized by contract to obtain the information.

S.B. 1598 sets out the following provisions for a governmental entity when releasing information under statutory provisions relating to a redacted collision report that may be

requested by any person or the bill's provisions relating to the release of a vehicle identification number and specific collision information relating to that vehicle:

- prohibits the entity from releasing personal information; and
- requires the entity to withhold or redact certain specified information.

S.B. 1598 establishes that, to the extent of any conflict, the bill prevails over another Act of the 89th Legislature, Regular Session, 2025, relating to nonsubstantive additions to and corrections in enacted codes.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.