

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1816
By: Hancock
Transportation
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In April 2024, the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV) reversed its ban on the registration and operation of Kei miniature vehicles on public roads. The bill sponsor has informed the committee that, in recent years, these vehicles have been gaining in popularity across the country due to their small size, low cost, maneuverability, and fuel efficiency. Following TxDMV's decision, S.B. 1816 seeks to provide statutory clarity about the registration and highway operation of Kei vehicles in Texas.

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. 1816 amends the Transportation Code to establish that, for purposes of issuing a title under the Certificate of Title Act or registering a vehicle under applicable state law, a miniature vehicle is considered to be a motor vehicle. The bill defines "miniature vehicle" as a miniature motor vehicle that satisfies the following criteria:

- is designed to propel itself with four or more tires in contact with the ground;
- complies with applicable federal law; and
- is not a custom vehicle or street rod, a neighborhood electric vehicle, a golf cart, or an off-highway vehicle, as those terms are defined by applicable statutory provisions.

S.B. 1816 authorizes a person to operate a miniature vehicle on a public highway only if the following conditions are met:

- the vehicle has been registered and titled in accordance with applicable state law, including the bill's provisions; and
- the vehicle is capable of operating in compliance with applicable Transportation Code provisions governing vehicles and traffic.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2025.