

By: Schwertner

S.B. No. 858

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT  
2 relating to certain criminal offenses involving the attachment or  
3 display of a wrong license plate or registration insignia;  
4 increasing criminal penalties.

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

6 SECTION 1. Section 504.944, Transportation Code, is amended  
7 to read as follows:

8 Sec. 504.944. OPERATION OF VEHICLE WITH WRONG LICENSE  
9 PLATE. (a) A person commits an offense if the person operates, or  
10 as the owner permits another to operate, on a public highway a motor  
11 vehicle that has attached to it a number plate or registration  
12 insignia issued for a different vehicle.

13 (b) An offense under this section is a misdemeanor  
14 punishable by a fine not to exceed \$200, except that the offense is  
15 a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed \$500 if it is shown  
16 at the trial of the offense that, at the time of the offense, the  
17 person knows that the license plate or registration insignia is  
18 stolen or otherwise issued for a different motor vehicle.

19 SECTION 2. Section 504.945, Transportation Code, is amended  
20 by amending Subsection (b) and adding Subsection (d-1) to read as  
21 follows:

22 (b) Except as provided by Subsections (d-1), (e), and (f),  
23 an offense under Subsection (a) is a misdemeanor punishable by a  
24 fine of not more than \$200, unless it is shown at the trial of the

1 offense that the owner knowingly altered or made illegible the  
2 letters, numbers, and other identification marks, in which case the  
3 offense is a Class B misdemeanor.

4 (d-1) An offense under Subsection (a)(1) is a misdemeanor  
5 punishable by a fine not to exceed \$500 if it is shown at the trial  
6 of the offense that, at the time of the offense, the person knows  
7 that the license plate is stolen or otherwise issued for a different  
8 motor vehicle.

9 SECTION 3. The changes in law made by this Act apply only to  
10 an offense committed on or after the effective date of this Act. An  
11 offense committed before the effective date of this Act is governed  
12 by the law in effect on the date the offense was committed, and the  
13 former law is continued in effect for that purpose. For purposes of  
14 this section, an offense was committed before the effective date of  
15 this Act if any element of the offense occurred before that date.

16 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.