



**State Representative Derek Merrin
District 47**

**House Bill 372 – Sponsor Testimony
Transportation Committee
October 29, 2019**

Chairman Green, Vice-Chair McClain, Ranking Member Sheehy, and Transportation & Public Safety Committee Members, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on HB 372. This legislation provides Ohioans, between 21 to 65 years old, the option to obtain and renew their driver license every 4 or 8 years. Current law only allows individuals to renew their driver license every 4 years.

Furthermore, the legislation offers an 8-year option for commercial driver licenses (CDL) and identification cards. Obtaining a driver license or renewing a driver license is a time consuming process. In Ohio, it is a common complaint that long lines exist at the BMV, which causes frustration and lost time for millions of Ohioans. One primary reason for long lines is the short-license renewal term of 4 years, which forces almost 8 million drivers to squeeze into a 4-year window for renewal. Only nine states, including Ohio, have a driver license that lasts only 4 years¹. Twenty-four states, including the District of Columbia, offer driver licenses that extend for 8 years¹.

An 8-year driver license option is a simple solution to save Ohioans time and money. By providing an 8-year license option, there would be millions of fewer, unnecessary trips to the BMV. The actual impact would depend on how many Ohioans would choose an 8-year license rather than a 4-year license. According to the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles, there were a total of 7,944,315 licensed drivers and 861,043 total identification card holders in 2018². These numbers increase every year. By shifting even a small percentage of drivers to 8-year licenses, congestion at the BMV would be reduced.

An 8-year license will be double the cost for a 4-year license minus \$1. From a fiscal standpoint, the bill's objective is to hold steady the revenue generated by the license fees. The deputy registrars will see no fiscal impact, as their fees are doubled. The \$1 reduction is attributed to state fees. My goal has been to take the fiscal impact issues off the table, but still encourage drivers to choose the 8-year license. The other states that provide a 4 or 8 year option have license fees structured similarly – double the cost, but minus \$1.

We have the opportunity to save Ohioans time, which will lead to increased productivity and less stress at the BMV. Others states have already implemented this change with no adverse impacts known. I appreciate the committee's time and look forward to answering any questions members may have at this time.

¹ <https://www.iii.org/state-drivers-license-renewal-laws-including-requirements-for-older-drivers>

² <https://www.bmv.ohio.gov/more-factfigures.aspx>

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