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H.B. 753 (with AM3281)
136th General Assembly

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

Click here for H.B. 753's Bill Analysis

Version: In House Transportation

Primary Sponsor: Rep. Schmidt

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

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Highlights

- The Bureau of Motor Vehicles may incur minimal one-time administrative costs to remove additional driver examination language options from its systems. Those costs may be offset by an ongoing reduction in expenditures related to no longer having to provide interpreters and print translation for examinations. Any decrease in drivers' or related license issuance and revenue is likely to be offset by a corresponding reduction in workload.
- State-run driver examination station locations operated by the Department of Public Safety will likely experience an increase in workload related to administering in-person knowledge tests. It is unclear whether these facilities have sufficient staff and resources to absorb the additional workload.

Detailed Analysis

The bill requires (1) that all drivers' examinations be administered in English, (2) that knowledge and skills tests be administered in person either at an authorized deputy registrar location or an authorized third-party skills testing site, and (3) prohibits the use of wireless communications devices during drivers' examinations.

Drivers' examinations

The bill's requirement that the Registrar of Motor Vehicles administer all drivers' examinations, including knowledge tests of applicable motor vehicle laws and skills tests, in English, is not expected to significantly impact the state Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV), which administers the examinations. The BMV may experience one-time administrative costs to update its systems and remove the existing additional language options. Those costs may be offset to some degree by an ongoing reduction in BMV expenditures from no longer having to provide

interpreters and print translations for examinations. The costs incurred for these services totaled $65,090 in FY 2025 and averaged nearly $45,000 per year from FY 2023 through FY 2025.

The BMV currently offers knowledge tests in American Sign Language (ASL), Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Haitian Creole, Japanese, Russian, Somali, and Spanish.[1] Testing in other languages may be scheduled with an interpreter. In calendar year (CY) 2025, the BMV administered a total of 801,156 knowledge tests. Of those, 797,784 (99.6%) were administered in person or online, and 3,372 (0.4%) were administered with the assistance of an interpreter in a total of 70 languages.[2] The following table shows a breakdown of in-person and online examinations administered by language in CY 2025.

Table 1. In-Person and Online Knowledge Tests Administered by Language, CY 2025

Language	Number of Examinations	Percent of Total Examinations
English	682,017	85.49%
Spanish	43,840	5.50%
French	28,605	3.59%
Haitian Creole	13,294	1.67%
Russian	12,877	1.61%
Arabic	12,179	1.53%
Other*	4,972	0.62%
Total	**797,784**	**100%**

*Includes: Somali (3,037 or 0.38%), Chinese (1,587 or 0.20%), ASL (276 or 0.03%), and Japanese (72 or 0.01%).

By limiting drivers' examinations to English, the BMV could also experience a reduction in the number of tests administered, licenses issued, and the amount of related fee revenue collected. The magnitude of any decrease will depend on the number of individuals who do not test for and obtain a license as a result of the bill. Any reduction in fee revenue is likely to be offset by the corresponding reduction in workload from not having to administer examinations or issue a license.

[1] ASL examinations can still be administered under the bill.

[2] Three languages accounted for 1,985, or 53.2%, of all examinations administered using an interpreter: Fulani/Wolof (34.3%), Swahili (12.7%), and Vietnamese (6.2%).

In-person knowledge tests

Under current law, an applicant for a knowledge test can take the test online or in person at select deputy registrar locations or at a driver examination station.[3] By requiring that all knowledge tests be administered in person, the bill will likely increase workload for driver examination stations and certain deputy registrars. It is unclear whether driver examination stations and deputy registrars have sufficient staff and resources to absorb the additional workload. The bill does authorize third-party skills testing sites for commercial driver's license (CDL) testing purposes.

Use of an electronic wireless communications device

The bill prohibits an applicant for a commercial driver's license temporary instruction permit (CLP) or a temporary instruction permit/temporary instruction permit identification card (TIPIC) from knowingly using an electronic wireless communications device while taking the required knowledge test. Violations are misdemeanors with penalties that increase based on the number of prior offenses and the applicant may be prohibited from retaking the test for a specified amount of time.

Under the bill, CLP violations range from a third degree misdemeanor to a first degree misdemeanor and the applicant is prohibited from retaking the test for a period ranging from 180 days to a permanent prohibition. TIPIC violations range from a fourth degree misdemeanor to a first degree misdemeanor and an applicant with a third or subsequent violation is prohibited from retaking the test for 180 days. Table 2 shows the possible fines and terms of incarceration for misdemeanor offenses generally.

Table 2. Fines and Jail Terms for Misdemeanor Offenses

Offense Level	Fine	Term of Incarceration
Misdemeanor 1st degree	Up to $1,000	Jail, not more than 180 days
Misdemeanor 2nd degree	Up to $750	Jail, not more than 90 days
Misdemeanor 3rd degree	Up to $500	Jail, not more than 60 days
Misdemeanor 4th degree	Up to $250	Jail, not more than 30 days

The bill is expected to generate very few additional cases for local criminal justice systems to adjudicate and sanction. Any associated increase in workload or costs is likely to be minimal and may be offset by fine, fee, and court cost revenue.

Operating a motor vehicle without a valid license – indirect effects

As a result of the bill, LBO anticipates that a number of individuals may be unable to complete a drivers' examination and subsequently will not obtain a driver's license. Some number of this population will likely choose to drive unlicensed, leading to a potential increase

[3] Driver examination stations are state-run facilities that are overseen by the Bureau of Motor Vehicles.

in the number of citations issued for operating a motor vehicle without a valid license. This offense is generally an unclassified misdemeanor subject to a fine of up to $1,000 and a term of community service of up to 500 hours. These violations are not subject to a jail term or community residential sanction.[4] If an offender has previously been convicted of or pleaded guilty to operating a motor vehicle without a valid driver's license, the offense elevates to a first degree misdemeanor, which is subject to a jail term of not more than 180 days, a fine of up to $1,000, or both. Any resulting impact on local criminal justice systems due to an increase in these violations is likely to be minimal.

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[4] R.C. 4510.12.