

Representatives

Cindy Abrams
Willis E. Blackshear, Jr.
Juanita O. Brent
Sara P. Carruthers
Rodney Creech
Steve Demetriou
Thomas Hall
Adam C. Miller
Kevin D. Miller
Ismail Mohamed



Chairman
Haraz N. Ghanbari

Vice-Chairman
Phil Plummer

Ranking Member
Cecil Thomas

HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes | September 27, 2023

Chairman Ghanbari called the committee to order at 11:11 a.m.

Chairman Ghanbari approves the minutes from the hearing of June 21, 2023.

Chairman Ghanbari calls forward HB 13 for its first hearing and a sub-bill for the bill. Ranking Member Thomas is recognized.

Ranking Member Thomas gives a description for the sub-bill that will eliminate the fee for hybrid vehicles.

Ranking Member Thomas motions to adopt the sub-bill.

There are no objections, and the sub-bill becomes part of the bill.

Chairman Ghanbari recognizes Representative Joe Miller and Representative Case Weinstein for sponsor testimony.

Representative Joe Miller states the bill's intention recognizes the need for a fee due to the fact that electric vehicles do not pay gas tax in order to maintain the roads. He states that it will be fair for hybrid vehicles that run on gasoline only and have the backup battery that provides for more fuel efficiency, to not have to pay the additional registration fee.

Representative Abrams states her concern is that for cars like the Ford Fusion does not start up unless they are going up a hill or increasing in speed. Therefore, they are not using gas at the same rate that gas vehicles are. She asks if there has been a fiscal analysis for the bill.

Representative Joe Miller states LSC does not have a difference between the plug-in hybrid and the build in hybrid. He states that there will be money lost in the transportation budget, however it is not fair for the owners of internal hybrids. He states that the internal hybrids do not charge unless it is moved, which requires there to be gas in the vehicle and only charges unless the combustion engine is being used. He asks if Representative Abrams knows the mileage difference between the two types of the vehicles.

Representative Abrams states she does not however there is math that was done by Representative Roemer that shows that paying the two hundred dollar or the one hundred and fifty dollar fee is a significantly better deal compared to the gas tax they will have to pay. '

Representative Joe Miller states when the original study was done, it was shown that the internal engines did get the same or similar gas mileage.

Representative Kevin Miller states his Ford Fusion has 38 miles to the gallon.

Representative Creech states there are purchasing decisions that decide what costs people are willing to pay. Compared to vehicles like the F350, they pay a higher tax for their gas usage. He asks what the fee difference will be between each vehicle in the internal hybrid.

Representative Joe Miller states he will send Representative Creech the model his office has gathered. He states that if we move to eliminate these fees then it will send a message to battery manufacturers that we are not punishing them for their business practice.

Representative Creech states vehicles are more expensive compared to fuel tax and he is not sure what the fair share would be. However, if you choose to buy that vehicle, you also knowingly take on the fee and therefore they are not being punished.

Representative Joe Miller states the technology has changed and there should be a more in depth look into the new technology vehicles that fairly balance each vehicle for the transportation budget.

Chairman Ghanbari states the fee was not there for some people who bought the vehicle before the fee was introduced and then enforced retroactively.

Representative Brent states she was a person that bought a car before the fee, and she still decided to vote for this fee in the transportation budget. She states that the gas tax should not be a flat rate and should take into account for the mileage of each vehicle as not everybody travels the same amount of distance. She states that people need to be made more aware when they buy a car what all of the additional fees will be.

Representative Joe Miller states the budget needs to be reworked and he is open to changing the bill to account for retroactivity.

Chairman Ghanbari asks Representative Brent about bringing the vehicle in and people may change the odometer as in the movie Ferris Buehler's day off.

Representative Brent states Ohioans do not do crazy things like Ferris Buehler.

Ranking Member Thomas states it may make more sense to charge a flat fee that everybody pays regardless of what vehicle you drive.

Representative Joe Miller states he had the same idea, and it takes into account weight and miles a year and that would determine how much impact you have on the roads. This may increase the gas tax, but this would not apply to those who drive through the state from other states.

Representative Brent states she thanks the sponsors of the bill, and she has always been a staunch supporter of making sure everybody feels seen in Ohio. She states that this bill would make people feel seen.

Representative Joe Miller thanks the chair for the opportunity to speak and urges the committee to tweak the bill in a form that will not hinder the transportation budget.

Chairman Ghanbari calls for the first hearing of HB 241

Representative Kevin Miller states this bill will allow for the filling of vacancies if they can prove that the candidate is qualified in their competitive qualities.

Representative Joe Miller states this bill will allow for the vacancies to be filled in statutory cities that need to go through the civil service process. Other cities are able to skip this process and immediately hire and fill their vacancies.

Chairman Ghanbari states this is an important point to be made on lateral transfers that are happening all over the state of Ohio. Individuals who are well experienced should not have to go through the process every time and it would be of great benefit to allow their experience to show their qualifications.

Representative Joe Miller states he does not own an electric vehicle nor is he a police officer however they are here to represent the people and both of these bills will accomplish this goal.

Ranking member Thomas states Cincinnati does take advantage of the lateral transfers and it has been beneficial for their city. He did not know that this was an issue in other jurisdictions.

Chairman Ghanbari calls for the first hearing of HB 237 and recognizes Representative Kevin Miller and Vice Chair Plummer.

Representative Kevin Miller states the bill's intention is to simplify the enforcement of UTVs or side by sides on roads. By implementing a statewide framework, the process will be streamlined and clearly outline the laws for those who drive these vehicles as well as those who enforce the laws. This will overall improve safety. This bill will function for county and township roads as long as the respective boards adopt a resolution to allow for UTVs on the roadway. If they choose not to adopt road use UTVs then it will remain illegal. This will allow for home rule authority to still determine whether UTVs will be legal or illegal on their roads so they can retain local control. This legislation also recognizes the importance of UTVs in our agriculture community.

Vice Chair Plummer states he looks at this bill in the same way that we look at enforcement of golf carts and the authorities respective to each vehicle.

Chairman Ghanbari calls for the first hearing of HB 194.

Representative Kevin Miller states this will create an innovative license plate program that will create a new revenue stream for the general revenue fund for the drug task forces of Ohio. It is a public-private business relationship that requires the BMV to allow for private businesses to bid for the opportunity to design and make specialty license plates. There will be oversight by the state to make sure the license plate still allows for readability. This will not affect any previous specialty license plates. This program is purely voluntary and does not create any new mandatory taxes or fees for Ohio citizens.

Representative Brent asks if specialty plates currently go through the General Assembly.

Representative Kevin Miller states that this is true and that they approve them and then they go to the registrar. The assembly will still be able to continue through their current program. This bill will allow for vendors to create their own plates as well that any citizen can purchase or work to design their own.

Chairman Ghanbari states this will allow a competitive process for an outside company to maintain the registrar's website and remove the state funding.

Representative Brent asks how we will know if they will be Ohio based vendors. She also states that we do not control the rule making of the plates and she has some concerns.

Representative Kevin Miller states if the system is not working with the vendor that is selected, the contract is for a two-year period and can be renewed.

Representative Carruthers asks how the competitive bidding process will work to make sure it will only be Ohio vendors.

Representative Kevin Miller states this is not currently in the bill.

Representative Carruthers asks if he would be open to this as an amendment.

Representative Kevin Miller states that he is.

Ranking member Thomas asks what sort of plates can be approved.

Representative Kevin Miller states it will be up to the registrars and the vendors to approve what sort of license plates are approved.

Chairman Ghanbari adjourns the committee at 12:05 p.m.

Chairman Ghanbari

Ranking Member Thomas