

Approved: 1/30/96  
Date

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Ben Vidricksen at 9:00 a.m. on January 25, 1996 in Room 254-E of the Capitol.

All members were present except:  
Senator Brady

Committee staff present: Hank Avila, Legislative Research Department  
Ben Barrett, Legislative Research Department  
Bruce Kinzie, Revisor of Statutes  
Martha Ozias, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:  
Steve Morris - Senator from Hugoton, 39th District  
Jane Rhys - Executive Director, Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities  
Carolyn Jeffries - Topeka Independent Living Resource Center  
William Fansler - Second Vice President, Kansas Association of the Deaf  
Wayne Mnich - Kansas Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Others attending: See attached list

**SB 393--PROVIDING DISTINCTIVE LICENSES FOR PERSONS WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING.**

Senator Morris addressed this bill on behalf of some hearing impaired individuals who had concerns about the possibility of being stopped by law enforcement personnel at which time they may reach down to get a notebook and be misconstrued as reaching for a gun. It was thought that having a license that readily identifies them as being hearing impaired would solve the problem. (Attachment 1)

Jane Rhys appeared before the committee to ensure the opportunity to make choices regarding participation in society and quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities. The Council supports this bill providing the individual has an option to have this type of license. (Attachment 2)

Carolyn Jeffries spoke in support of SB 393 provided that the language in line 20 remains the same and that the individual be allowed the choice of whether to obtain a distinctive license or not. Some feel this could be a benefit, others feel it would be labeling or classifying. (Attachment 3)

William Fansler felt it was a good idea to have a different color background of photo on the license so that law enforcement officers would be able to deal with a hearing impaired person in their terms of communication. (Attachment 4)

Wayne Mnich also stood before the Committee to add his voice of support for this legislation.

The Committee then turned its attention to the Confirmation of Timothy E. McKee for the Kansas Corporation Commission.

Senator Harris made a motion to recommend Timothy McKee favorably for this position. Senator Lawrence seconded this. Motion carried.

A request was made to introduce a bill which would increase fines involving railroad crossings. A motion was made by Senator Harris to have this legislation introduced. It was seconded by Senator Burke. Motion carried.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES, Room 254-E  
Statehouse, at 9:00 a.m. on January 25, 1996.

A motion was then made by Senator Lawrence to approve the minutes of the January 24th meeting. Senator Harrington seconded this. Motion carried.

Senator Burke made a motion to recommend SB 393 as favorable for passage. Senator Harris proposed an amendment to clarify the word "may" in line 20 to insure that this would not be a requirement for the applicant. Senator Burke agreed to this amendment to his motion. The motion was seconded by Senator Harris and the Committee voted to recommend this bill as favorable for passage as amended.

The meeting was then adjourned at 9:35 a.m. by the Chairman.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 30, 1996.

**SENATE TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES  
COMMITTEE GUEST LIST**

DATE: JANUARY 25, 1994

NAME	REPRESENTING
Tom Whitaker	Ks MOTOR CYCLISTS ASSN
Betty M. Brida	KDOR
John W. Smith	KDOR
Jacques Dales	Ks Ind. Auto Dealers
Alan Behr	Economic Lifelines
Karlton Cruise	KCDHH
Carolyn Tellus	TILRC
Rhoda Ames	TILRC
Trapper Daniel	TILRC
Carol Woods	Topeka Independent Living Resource Center
Wayne M. Rich	K/C II H H
William Jausler	KANS. ASSN. BLD DEAF
Jan Rhy	Ks Council on Developmental Disabilities
Dick Lawin	BLE
Jim Keel	BLE
ED SCHLAUB	WESTERN RESOURCES INC.

STATE OF KANSAS

STEVE MORRIS

SENATOR, 39TH DISTRICT

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(316) 544-2084

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TOPEKA, KS 66612

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TOPEKA

SENATE CHAMBER

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

CHAIRMAN: JOINT COMMITTEE ON COMPUTERS  
AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

VICE CHAIRMAN: AGRICULTURE

MEMBER: ENERGY & NATURAL RESOURCES  
WAYS AND MEANS

SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

January 25, 1996

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee:

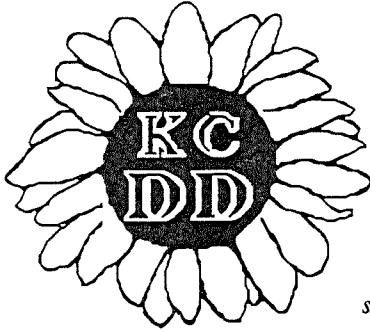
Thank you for giving me the opportunity to appear before your committee today. Senate Bill 393 is a very simple bill that would modify Kansas drivers licenses slightly to allow for a rapid identification of those Kansans who are hearing impaired.

Some hearing impaired individuals have concerns with the possibility of being stopped by law enforcement personnel at which time they may reach down to write a note from a notebook to the law enforcement officer telling that person they are hearing impaired. In some cases this could be construed as reaching for a gun. Having a drivers license that readily identifies them as being hearing impaired should solve this problem.

I have coordinated this change with the Department of Motor Vehicles. They have no problems with it and have stated that the cost will be minimal.

Thank you very much.

SENATE TRANSPORTATION  
DATE: 1/25/96  
ATTACHMENT: 1



## **Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities**

BILL GRAVES, Governor  
TOM ROSE, Chairperson  
JANE RHYS, Executive Director

Docking State Off. Bldg., Room 141, 915 Harrison  
Topeka, KS 66612-1570  
Phone (913) 296-2608, FAX (913) 296-2861

*"To ensure the opportunity to make choices regarding participation in society and quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities"*

### **TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES**

**JANUARY 25, 1996**

Testimony in Regard to S.B.393

AN ACT CONCERNING DRIVER'S LICENSES; PROVIDING DISTINCTIVE LICENSES FOR PERSONS WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING.

*To ensure the opportunity to make choices regarding participation in society and quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities.*

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, I am appearing today on behalf of the Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities in support of S.B.393, which would authorize distinctive licenses for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The Kansas Council is a federally mandated, federally funded council composed of individuals who are appointed by the Governor. At least half of the membership are persons with developmental disabilities or their immediate relatives. We also have representatives of the major agencies who provide services for individuals with developmental disabilities. Our mission is to advocate for individuals with developmental disabilities, to see that they have choices regarding their participation in society, just as you and I have choices.

The Council supports this bill which would provide individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing with a distinguishable drivers' license, as long as the individual has an option to have this type of license. In the event of an accident or other contact with law enforcement officers or medical providers, it would be immediately known that this person needed an alternative form of communication. We appreciate the thought behind this bill and the concern for individuals with disabilities.

Jane Rhys, Executive Director  
Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities  
Docking State Office Building, Room 141  
915 SW Harrison  
Topeka, KS 66612-1570  
913 296-2608

SENATE TRANSPORTATION  
DATE: 1/25/96  
ATTACHMENT: 2



Offices located in  
the Historic Crawford Building

# Topeka Independent Living Resource Center

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(913) 233-4572 V/TDD • Fax 913-233-1561 • Toll Free 1-800-443-2207  
501 SW Jackson Street • Suite 100 • Topeka, KS 66603-3300

Testimony to  
Senate Transportation and Utilities Committee  
regarding Senate Bill 393  
January 25, 1996

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today on Senate Bill 393. My name is Carolyn Jeffries. I am representing the Topeka Independent Living Resource Center (TILRC). TILRC is an advocacy agency which provides services designed to empower individuals to move beyond barriers and participate, fully, in community life. TILRC advocates for disability rights and educates individuals and professional organizations about living fully and independently, working towards shifting societal attitudes about disability away from dependency, pity and charity; towards independence and integration.

The Topeka Independent Living Resource Center supports SB 393 provided that the language in line 20 remains the same. It is important that persons in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities be allowed the choice of whether to obtain a distinctive license or not. While some feel this could be of benefit, others dislike the "labeling or classifying".

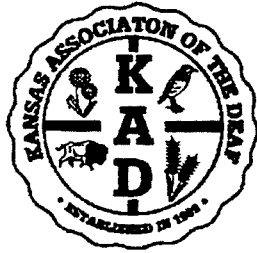
Next I would like to ask a question. Is this bill intended to replace the Safety Communication Sticker Program developed by the Kansas Commission for the Deaf several years ago?

It is my understanding that this bill was proposed to assist police officers distinguish Deaf persons from hearing persons. There have been situations when police, while using a loud speaker, have made requests of persons to get out of their vehicle, observed the occupant reach into the glove compartment. Understandably, the officer took this as a possible life-threatening situation, only to find, after approaching the vehicle with caution, and gun in hand, a person with pen and paper. The passing of this bill would not prevent this situation from occurring.

There have been situations where officers see that the person is unresponsive and assume them to be uncooperative. Law enforcement personnel, after seeing the distinctive drivers license would then know that communication assistance is needed and officers could then respond appropriately by contacting an interpreter if this is the form of communication requested by the Deaf or Hard of Hearing person, but, this should happen whether the license states a person is Deaf or not.

It is obvious that in addition to any type of differences in drivers licenses, there needs to be more extensive education for both parties. Persons who are Deaf or Hard of hearing need to understand the position an officer is put in when they reach into a pocket or glove box without first indicating their hearing disability. Training for all law enforcement personnel as well as emergency personnel needs to occur extensively and on a regular basis regarding situations involving persons who use alternative methods of communication.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to testify.



## KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF THE DEAF

I am William Fansler, 2nd vice-president of KAD and thank you for giving me an opportunity to present my view on SB 393 regarding the drivers' licenses for the deaf and hard of hearing.

Personally it is a good idea to have a different color background of the photo being put into the license and enforcement officers will have an easier time recognizing that one is deaf or hard of hearing so that they can deal with him/her in terms of communication.

Many deaf and hard of hearing people would appreciate that kind of identification and one feature of the bill that I like is by giving them a choice whether they would like to have a different background color than the regular red or blue to be put on their licenses.

Please support this bill. Thank you.

William Fansler, second vice-president

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SENATE TRANSPORTATION  
DATE: 1/25/94  
ATTACHMENT: 4