

MINUTES OF THE SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Senator Les Donovan at 8:30 a.m. on March 6, 2002 in Room 245-N of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Senator Harrington  
Senator Pugh

Committee staff present: Hank Avila, Legislative Research Department  
Bruce Kinzie, Revisor of Statutes  
Marian F. Holeman, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Kathryn Kayser  
Cameron W. Strebral  
Rep. David Huff  
Rep. Bob Bethell  
Rep. Lisa Benlon

Others attending: See attached list

**HB 2656: Re license plates for survivors of Pearl Harbor**

Kathryn Kayser explained to the Committee she had approached Representative Stone when upon her father's death, her family discovered the Pearl Harbor Survivor license plates had to be returned to the Motor Vehicle Department to be destroyed (Attachment 1). Her grandson, Cameron W. Stebral, also testified in support of this bill which would allow him to keep the license plate (Attachment 2). Staff explained that this particular plate was inadvertently omitted from previously enacted legislation dealing with other military plates, so this is really just a technical cleanup measure. Since members felt this bill is noncontroversial in nature, Senator Larry Salmans moved HB 2656 be passed and placed on the consent calendar. Senator Schodorf seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**HB 2675: Re motor vehicles; personalized license plates, number of**

Rep. Huff requested this bill in order to bring uniformity to the law which regulates display of license plates. Current law requires all plates to be displayed on the rear of vehicles, except the personalized plate which must be displayed on both front and rear of vehicles (Attachment 3). Cynthia Fisk had originally brought the problem to Representative Huff's attention and had planned to testify today. However, she was unable to attend so Representative Huff presented her testimony (Attachment 4). She has been stopped and fined for no other reason than not displaying her personalized tag on the front of her car. That fine would now be \$90.00.

Written testimony only Sheila Walker, Director, Division of Motor Vehicles, KDOR (Attachment 5). No other conferees appeared and the hearing was closed on **HB 2675**.

**HB 2699: Re prohibiting covering license plates**

Representative Bob Bethell testified in support of this bill which he sees as an additional tool to aid law enforcement. Obscured license plates, whether by some type of plastic covering or frame, hinder law enforcement's ability to identify a vehicle (Attachment 6). He explained that several other states have similar laws. Representative Lisa Benlon joined Representative Bethell in sponsoring this bill. She explained that plastic covers often cause reflective problems that make the tag illegible (Attachment 7).

Discussed impact of **HB 2699** on car dealers' use of "plastic bag tags" for demonstration drives. It was suggested that since this is a widely used, standard dealership practice, perhaps non full privilege (full use) dealer tags should be excluded from provisions in the bill. Current law already

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE at 8:30 a.m. on March 6, 2002 in Room 245-N of the Capitol.

spells out details of cost, display & use of full privilege dealer tags. Senator Schodorf moved to adopt a conceptual amendment that this bill would not apply to regular dealer plates. Senator Goodwin seconded the motion. Motion carried.

There was an expressed concern regarding the bill's possible impact on tourism in the state, since this law would apply to all vehicles in the State of Kansas. Staff will see what information can be obtained regarding this matter and report back to the Committee.

**Final action**

Following a brief discussion, Senator Salmans moved to recommend **HB 2675** favorable for passage. Senator Schodorf seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Approval of minutes**

Senator Salmans moved to approve minutes of February 26, 2002 meeting. Senator Goodwin seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 7, 2002.



Chairman Donovan  
Members of the Senate Transportation Committee

My name is Kathryn Kayser, and I am here to support HB 2656. I want to take this opportunity to thank you for supporting this legislation because the Pearl Harbor Survivor license plates are wonderful keepsakes for the families of those honored by this license plate.

My father Benjamin L. Phillips received his license tag when it was issued approximately 10 years ago. The Emporia Gazette featured him in an article about the license plates. My father was so proud of the license plate. It was not unusual for people to ask him about it, and he was always eager to explain its significance - both to him and to our country.

When my mother returned the license plate to the Motor Vehicle Department upon my father's death, we were appalled to learn that it had to be destroyed. I made many phone calls at that time, and though everyone was sympathetic, each told me that it was the law.

One of the people I spoke with at that time was Representative Stone. Because of his efforts, I stand before you today and once again thank you for helping insure that these Pearl Harbor Survivor license plates can be kept as heirlooms by the families and passed to future generations so that we may never forget the sacrifices these men made for their country.

Respectfully,



Kathryn Kayser

1-1

SENATE TRANSPORTATION  
COMMITTEE -DATE: 3-6-02  
ATTACHMENT: 1

Chairman Donovan  
Members of the Senate Transportation Committee

My name is Cameron Washington Stebral, and I am here to support HB 2656. You might think I'm just a regular kid, but Ben Phillips was my great grandpa and I loved him a lot. I would like to have that license plate someday.

Thank you,

Cameron Stebral

Cameron W. Stebral

2-1

SENATE TRANSPORTATION  
COMMITTEE -DATE: 3-6-02  
ATTACHMENT: 2

## HB - 2675 - PERSONALIZED PLATES

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

Currently, the state of Kansas has 18 different types of licence plates for cars and trucks. Kansas law requires all plates to be displayed on the rear of the vehicle, with the exception of the personalized licence plate. By current law, this plate must be displayed on both the front and rear of the car.

Many cars have no brackets or fasteners for a plate to be attached to the front of the vehicle. Some individuals wonder why they receive two plates, when the state requires only one plate to be displayed on the rear of the car. I would estimate that at least one out of five personalized plate owners do not use their front plate. However, it is the state law, that these plates be displayed on both the front and rear of the vehicle. Since we have now tripled the fines, it would cost the violator about \$90.00. An officer can stop you for no other reason than not displaying the personalized plate on the front of your car. House Bill 2675 would eliminate the requirement for these plates to be displayed on the front of your car, and instead make it an option. This bill will bring uniformity to the law that regulates the display of licence plates.

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

Rep. David Huff

3-1

SENATE TRANSPORTATION  
COMMITTEE -DATE: 3-6-02  
ATTACHMENT: 3

## HB - 2675 - VANITY PLATES

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

When I bought personalized plates, I was surprised that I received two plates. Since I know that Kansas only displays one plate in the rear of the car, I asked the licence office clerk about the extra plate. The clerk said "Don't worry about it, but you might keep it in the car just in case you get stopped." Since I already had a Jayhawk plate on the front of my car, I didn't put the extra one on my car. Well, much to my surprise, I was stopped and ticketed by the highway patrol for no other reason than not having the personalized plate displayed on the front of my car. I had broken no other law and was amazed that I was stopped. I only ever wanted one personalized plate to begin with, so can you please repeal the law that requires the purchase and display of two plates.

Thank you,  
Cynthia Fisk

4-1

SENATE TRANSPORTATION  
COMMITTEE -DATE: 3-6-02  
ATTACHMENT: 4

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Division of Vehicles

MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Chairman Les Donovan  
Members of the Senate Transportation Committee

**FROM:** Sheila J. Walker, Director of Vehicles *Sheila J. Walker*

**DATE:** March 6, 2002

**SUBJECT:** House Bill 2675 – Personalized Plates

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, I am Sheila Walker, Director of the Kansas Division of Vehicles. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony today regarding House Bill 2675.

Current law requires the display of personalized plates on the front and the rear of the vehicle for which the plates are issued. As originally introduced, House Bill 2675 would have reduced the number of personalized motor vehicle license plates issued for autos and trucks, from two to one.

The House Transportation Committee amended the bill to require the Division of Vehicles to continue to produce two personalized plates, but leave it at the vehicle owner's option to display one or both plates.

Personalized plates are issued for a five-year period. During the last five-year cycle, 96,685 personalized plate pairs were issued. Of this total, 3,377 were motorcycle personalized plates, which were issued just one plate.

Passage of House Bill 2675 in its original form would have resulted in a significant cost reduction for producing a second plate, including raw materials, as well as the cost of labor. The state, however, would have lost the reflectorized plate fees currently collected on the second plate (\$.50 per plate). Despite the decrease in reflectorized plate fees, reducing the number of personalized plates issued from two to one, would result in an overall savings of close to \$95,000:

93,308 front license plates would not be produced	\$1.512 each	\$141,081.70
93,308 uncollected reflectorized plate fees	\$.50 each	(\$ 46,654.00)
<b>Total Savings</b>		<b>\$ 94,427.70</b>

The Division's Vehicle Information Processing System programs would need to be modified to accommodate the reflectorized plate fee changes.

SENATE TRANSPORTATION  
COMMITTEE -DATE: 3-6-02  
ATTACHMENT: 5

5-1



With the changes made in the House Transportation Committee, however, the state will not see any savings in materials or labor, and no programming changes will need to be made.

One suggestion under consideration was to have the vehicle owner indicate on the application whether he or she wanted to order one plate or two. The cost would be \$40 for one plate, and an additional amount for two plates. This, of course, would generate more revenue for the highway fund. However, the programming required would be extensive – more than 500 hours, costing up to \$50,000 for contract programmers.

Under this scenario, a law enforcement officer on a vehicle stop would not know whether the vehicle should have one plate or two without additional verification requests from dispatch.

Error corrections would also be difficult, as there are currently edits built into the system to assist law enforcement by preventing a vehicle owner from getting a replacement plate, and then fraudulently placing it on another vehicle.

An inequity already exists in the fees charged for specialty plates. In general, specialty plates cost \$40, and the owner only receives one plate. For example, recipients of educational institution plates, Children's Trust Fund, Shriners, and others pay \$40 (in addition to royalty fees) and they get one plate in return. Personalized plates are the only plates where the recipient gets two plates for the same \$40 price.

In conclusion, the Division appreciated the spirit in which Rep. Huff introduced the original bill. It helps bring consistency to the specialty plates available in the state of Kansas.

Thank you for allowing me to present written testimony on this measure. Please let me know if you have any questions.

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TOPEKA

### Testimony on House Bill 2699

Thank you Chairman Donovan and members of the Senate Transportation committee for allowing me time to present my support for HB 2699. I am Representative Bob Bethell of the 113<sup>th</sup> District.

My concern that has led to being a co-sponsor of this piece of legislation comes from the issue of why license plates are required. Some may think that the purpose of licensing a vehicle is only to allow the “government” the opportunity to receive more of a taxpayer’s income. That however is not the purpose. License plates are to identify the vehicle as being legally owned and operated. The license plate should also give the ability to quickly read the State of origin, the year of registration and the identification number.

Knowing that the purpose of the license plate is to give the ability to law enforcement and other citizens to discern the ownership of a vehicle it becomes a concern when the license plate is obscured. There are two ways that this bill addresses the obscuring of the plate. The first is by covering the plate with some type of plastic that may or may not be opaque; the second method of covering or obscuring the information on the plate is by covering the information with a frame of some sort.

Limiting the obscuring of the information on the license plate of any vehicle that uses the roads and highways of Kansas will be a benefit to the people of our state.

I appreciate the opportunity to be before you today and ask for your favorable support of HB 2699.

Chairman Donovan I will be happy to stand for questions.

6-1

SENATE TRANSPORTATION  
 COMMITTEE -DATE: 3-6-02  
 ATTACHMENT: 6

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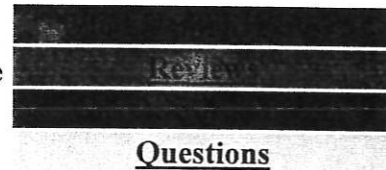
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Rep. Bob Bethell  
113<sup>th</sup> District

*Bob Bethell  
District 113*

6-2

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TOPEKA

HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

CHAIRMAN: HIGHER EDUCATION  
LEGISLATIVE POST AUDITMEMBER: EDUCATION  
FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS

**Testimony on House Bill 2699**  
**Before the Senate Transportation Committee**  
**March 6, 2002**

Chairman Donovan and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in favor of HB2699.

I have noticed, in my district, vehicles that have their license plate covered with a clear or smoke-colored plastic lens. During days when the sun is bright or when the headlights of a following car hit the tag in a certain way, the plastic reflects the light and makes the tag illegible. This bill will outlaw such covers.

Also, some frames are infringing on the readability of the state name, registration year or 6 digit identification number on the tag. HB2699 clarifies the intended purpose of current law regarding license plate frames. The new language spells out that all numerals and letters on the tag must be visible.

It would be a misdemeanor violation if stopped for an infraction.

The first guilty conviction would impose a \$30 fine.

The second would be a \$60 fine.

Upon the third and subsequent convictions, a \$150 fine will be imposed.

After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack, everyone's attention has drifted toward safety measures to protect citizens from further attacks. It behooves us to take action to make sure the one item that may identify a vehicle and its owner is legible at all times.

I ask for your support of HB2699.

SENATE TRANSPORTATION

COMMITTEE -DATE: 3-6-02ATTACHMENT: 7

Mr. Chairman, I will entertain any questions the committee may have.

7-1