

MINUTES OF THE SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dwayne Umbarger at 8:30 a.m. on February 26, 2010, in Room 152-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Senator Anthony Hensley- excused

Committee staff present:

Bruce Kinzie, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Daniel Yoza, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Julian Efirid, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Jill Shelley, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Cindy Shepard, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Major Mark Bruce, Kansas Highway Patrol
Bob Bethell, Representative, State of Kansas

Others attending:

See attached list.

The Chairman opened the hearing on **SB 480 - Regulating traffic; license plates**. Bruce Kinzie, staff revisor, reviewed the bill stating that violations of license plate visibility, including plastic coverings, would become a traffic infraction instead of a misdemeanor resulting in a \$60 fine plus court costs. It was noted that the fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget is incorrect and would be corrected when the Kansas Legislative Research Department prepares a supplemental note.

Major Mark Bruce, appeared on behalf of Colonel Terry Maple and the Kansas Highway Patrol in support of the intent of **SB 480**. He stated that license plates which are not clearly visible jeopardize the safety of law enforcement officers and may adversely affect the safety of law-abiding citizens. This bill also enhances the public's ability to assist law enforcement by being able to report a suspect and vehicle description, including license plate information, increasing the possibility of apprehending the offender (Attachment 1).

Bob Bethell, Representative, State of Kansas, testified as a proponent of **SB 480**. He indicated that this bill benefits the people of Kansas in the area of public safety. The covering of a license plate is a detriment to the ability to easily view the plate and he can find no valid reason to cover a plate unless one wants to obscure view of the plate (Attachment 2).

Discussion followed regarding language to address license plate frame coverings. An amendment was requested to clarify language.

There being no further conferees, the hearing on **SB 480** was closed.

The Chairman called attention to final action on **SB 544 - Metropolitan transit authority, definition of metropolitan area**.

Senator Schmidt moved, Senator Huntington seconded, to recommend SB 544 favorably for passage. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for March 2, 2010.

SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE: 2-26-10

NAME	REPRESENTING
Ed Klumpp	KACP/KPOA/KSA



Mark Parkinson, Governor
Terry L. Maple, Superintendent

www.kansashighwaypatrol.org

**Testimony on Senate Bill 480
Senate Transportation Committee**

**Presented By
Major Mark Bruce
Kansas Highway Patrol**

February 26, 2010

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I am Major Mark Bruce and I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today on behalf of Colonel Terry Maple and the Kansas Highway Patrol regarding Senate Bill 480. This bill would enhance current law regarding the visibility and display of license plates. Violations would be classified as traffic infractions with a fine of \$60 as set forth in the Uniform Fine Schedule.

The KHP supports this committee's interest in increasing the visibility of license plates. There are many good reasons why license plates should be clearly visible. This morning, I would like to address three that I think are quite compelling.

1. License plates which are not clearly visible jeopardize the safety of law enforcement officers. It is imperative that police officers are able to determine if a license plate is current, displayed on the correct vehicle, if the vehicle is stolen or if it is associated with individuals wanted in connection with a crime. The inability of an officer to clearly read the information on a license plate before making contact with a vehicle's occupants makes an already dangerous encounter more hazardous and unnecessarily so.
2. The safety of a law-abiding citizen may be adversely affected if a license plate displayed on their vehicle isn't clearly visible. If an officer incorrectly provides license plate information to dispatch because it couldn't be clearly read, the information returned could indicate that warrants exist on that vehicle or its occupants. Weapons may be drawn and what should be a routine interaction has the potential to become much more than that.
3. This bill also enhances the public's ability to assist law enforcement with the apprehension of criminals. When a citizen witnesses a crime and is able to report a suspect and vehicle description, to include license plate information, the possibility of an immediate apprehension is increased. This is especially significant as it relates to the commission of violent crimes. The sooner these offenders can be arrested the safer we all will be.

The Kansas Highway Patrol supports the intent of this bill to ensure that license plates are clearly visible to law enforcement officers and the public. Again, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you this morning and would be happy to address any questions you might have.

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TOPEKA
Testimony on SB 480
Senate Transportation
February 26, 2010

Mr. Chairman and members of Senate Transportation, I am Bob Bethell, Representative of Dist 113 to the Kansas House of Representatives.

I appear today in support of SB 480. The concept in SB 480 is one that benefits the people of Kansas in the arena of Public Safety. The covering of the license plate on a vehicle while I know some see it as an aesthetic improvement to the view of their automobile is a detriment to the ability to easily view the plate and its authenticity as well the currency of registration. This is not to mention the decrease in the ability to actually read the plate.

I find no valid reason to cover a plate unless one wants to obscure the ability of another to view the plate.

Mr. Chairman I would stand for questions.

Senate Transportation

2-26-10

Attachment 2