

Testimony
Committee on Transportation
Senate Bill No. 96
February 7, 2013

Representative Swanson, Chairman and members of the Committee on Transportation, as Treasurer of Douglas County I would like to thank you for allowing me to provide written testimony in favor of Senate Bill No. 96, which would allow counties with multiple vehicle registration facilities to add a transaction charge not to exceed five dollars at any facility.

In addition to our courthouse location, Douglas County has operated two full-time satellite offices since the early 1990's, and added one part-time satellite office in 2007. The work of registering all vehicles in the county is fairly evenly distributed among the three full-time offices. Each office will process approximately one quarter of the vehicle registrations, and the remaining quarter is processed through mail and on-line renewals. In response to the economic crisis of 2008 and the corresponding loss of county revenue, we initiated a satellite fee to avoid cutting back on service. Of course we had complaints from patrons of the satellite locations, but we heard from even more that preferred paying the fee over driving across town or losing the office close to their home or place of work. For the first three months we saw business at the courthouse (with no fee) increase slightly with a corresponding drop at the satellite locations. Since then, however, business is back to normal.

As all levels of government seek to reduce budgets while maintaining excellent service, I believe passage of SB 96 is a common sense solution. Registration renewals can be done through the mail, and renewing on-line has been much improved over the past few years. But, we still have lines at the end of the month in Douglas County. We do our best to keep them moving and provide the best service possible, which our taxpayers appreciate. Our taxpayers also appreciate our multiple locations. I think it is unfair to penalize someone that lives at one end of town by raising the fee at the office closest to them, or forcing them to drive to the courthouse to avoid the fee. If we are faced with cuts again in the future, our preference would be to add a small fee at the courthouse location. A further increase in fees at satellite offices would not only be a hardship on our customers, but also create a hardship for the County. We simply do not have space in the Courthouse to process a larger volume of vehicle registrations.

The Douglas County Treasurer's office respectfully requests that this legislation be advanced from this Committee for further action. Thank you for your consideration.

Paula Gilchrist
Douglas County Treasurer

House Transportation
Date: 3-7-13
Attachment # 8