

HB 2977 -- MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION

SPONSOR: Caton

This bill defines "resident" and "residence address" in the context of motor vehicle registration and driver licensing. There will be a rebuttable presumption that a motor vehicle owned and operated by a resident with a residence address in the State will be subject to the State's titling and registration requirements, and the owner must pay all applicable fees and taxes for the motor vehicle.

The bill provides that it will be unlawful for a resident of the State with a residence address in the State to register a motor vehicle in another state with the intent to circumvent motor vehicle titling and registration requirements or to register a motor vehicle under a shell entity in another state to circumvent motor vehicle titling and registration requirements.

This bill specifies factors for consideration when determining whether a resident intended to circumvent titling and registration requirements by registering the motor vehicle in another state and specifies factors for consideration when determining whether an entity is a shell entity.

If the Department of Revenue determines a resident of the State has registered the motor vehicle in another state, has registered the vehicle under a shell entity in another state, or has willfully made a false statement in regard to the purchase of a motor vehicle, and the resident failed to register the motor vehicle requiring registration, the Department must notify the resident in writing that:

- (1) The resident is required to obtain a Missouri certificate of title and registration for the motor vehicle and pay all taxes and fees owed within 60 days;
- (2) Failure to pay such taxes will result in a \$500 penalty; and
- (3) If the resident fails to comply with (1) and (2) within the 60-day time frame, the resident's license will be suspended until all taxes and fees for registration and titling are paid in full.

A resident of this State who willfully makes a false statement about the purchase of a motor vehicle that is subject to fees and taxes for titling and registration in this State, or who willfully attempts to evade payment of related fees and taxes, is

guilty of a fraudulent practice and will be assessed a fine equal to 75% of the amount of the unpaid fees and taxes and will be required to pay all applicable fees and taxes at the time the motor vehicle is titled and registered.

The Department of Revenue can use the motorist insurance identification database to identify and determine the ownership of any motor vehicle not properly titled and registered in this State as required by law. If the Department determines the owner is not in compliance, the Department can impose a \$500 penalty on the owner.

If the Department determines appropriate fees and taxes were not paid when a motor vehicle was purchased, the owner must pay all appropriate fees, taxes, and penalties to comply with Missouri law.

The Director can waive or reduce penalties imposed under the section related to willful false statements in registering motor vehicles upon making a record of the Department's actions and upon reasonable cause shown.

This bill is similar to HB 2958 (2026).