

HCS HB 3175 -- LIMITED ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT

SPONSOR: Brown

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS by Consent" by the Standing Committee on Crime and Public Safety by a vote of 16 to 0. Voted "Do Pass-Not Consent" by the Standing Committee on Consent and Procedure by a vote of 7 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 3175.

This bill establishes "Mason's Law"

The bill allows a resident of this State who has a health condition or disability that limits or impairs their ability to effectively communicate with law enforcement to apply to the Department of Revenue for a designation that will be associated with the person's license plate number and made available to law enforcement under the Missouri Uniform Law Enforcement System (MULES).

The application must be made on a form prescribed by the Department of Revenue and must be signed by a physician, certifying that the applicant or their child, parent, or spouse has such a condition or disability and will have the condition or disability for at least five years.

This bill requires the Department of Revenue to notify the Highway Patrol of approved applications. The Highway Patrol must prepare an entry in MULES that indicates the applicant or the applicant's child, parent, or spouse has a physical or mental health condition that may impair the ability to effectively communicate with law enforcement. The entry will remain active for five years unless the applicant requests its removal. The entry in MULES may be reactivated for another period of five years upon submission of a renewal form signed by a physician meeting the same requirements as the original application.

The Department of Public Safety must issue guidance and education materials to all law enforcement agencies in the State to promote awareness of the designation established in the bill. Rulemaking authority is granted to the Department of Revenue to implement the provisions of this bill.

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this is to establish a collaborative system to alert law enforcement officers during traffic stops that the driver potentially has a health condition or disability that would impair the driver's ability to effectively communicate with law enforcement. The bill came to be as a result of an incident that happened in Kansas City. This will allow a person to fill out a form when he or she registers for a driver's license to have an indication put on the driver's license to alert law enforcement that the person has an impairment that interferes with his or her ability to communicate with law enforcement. The bill creates a proactive way for people with disabilities to alert law enforcement about their impairments. This will allow law enforcement to approach exchanges with compassion and clarity. Other states have already implemented such measures and have proven that this approach works.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Brown; Arnie C. Dienoff; Megan Brown; Mason Ott; Lauren Ray; Mo Speech Hearing Lang. Assn.; and KCPD Kansas City Mo Police Dept..

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.