

RECIPROCAL DRIVING PRIVILEGES

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Senate Bill 501 (S-3, as passed by the Senate)

Sponsor: Sen. Jim Stamas

House Committee: Transportation and Infrastructure

Senate Committee: Transportation

Complete to 2-29-16

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

The bill would rewrite the section of the Michigan Vehicle Code that addresses the conditions under which drivers from other countries can operate a passenger vehicle in Michigan without obtaining a driver's license.

Currently, under Section 302a of the Vehicle Code, an operator of a motor vehicle who is a resident of another country and who holds an operator's license in that country is not required to obtain a Michigan license to operate a passenger vehicle if all the following conditions are met:

- The driver does not receive compensation for operating the vehicle.
- The secretary of state determines that the standards of the other country for licensing operators correspond to those of this state and the other country extends the same privileges to person licensed by Michigan.
- The secretary of state and the other country have exchanged letters confirming the reciprocal extension of privileges.

Senate Bill 501 would rewrite this section of the Code. Under the bill, a driver with a valid license issued by another country would not be required to obtain a license to operate a passenger vehicle for the period of time he or she is *legally present* in Michigan, as long as the driver is not receiving compensation. The bill adds that the non-resident driver could operate a motor vehicle in the state without obtaining a license if the individual has in his or her *immediate possession* all the following:

- A valid license to operate a motor vehicle issued by a country other than the United States.
- If no English translation appears on the front or back of the license, an international driving permit or comparable English translation of a valid license to operate a motor vehicle.
- A valid passport, visa, or other valid documentation to verify legal presence in Michigan.

The bill also specifies that a valid license to operate a motor vehicle issued by a country other than the United States that is enhanced or secured to comply with the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative would satisfy the previously stated requirements.

The secretary of state would need to establish a unique driver record for a driver from another country upon receipt of an abstract of conviction for any offense committed in violation of the act by the individual operating the motor vehicle. The bill specifies that the operation of a motor vehicle by an individual who possesses a valid license issued by a country other than the United States is subject to the Vehicle Code. Further, an individual with a unique driver record created under the act would be subject to fees, fines, restrictions, and enforcements as if licensed under the code.

The bill says nothing would prohibit the secretary of state from entering into a reciprocal agreement and exchanging letters confirming the extension of privileges to operate vehicles with another country, and the secretary of state would have to publish on its website a list of such countries.

MCL257.302a

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill removes the current requirement that the department exchange letters with other countries to confirm reciprocal extensions of privileges to operate motor vehicles; this would now be voluntary. Any savings are expected to be minimal. The bill would have no fiscal impact on local units of government.

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.