



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Safer roads on the way with Senate approval of driver cards

SB 833B will allow Oregonians to go through an alternative process to obtain a short-term driver card

SALEM—The Oregon Senate today voted to improve the safety of the state's roads by ensuring that more qualified drivers are able to get certification. SB 833B, which passed on a 20-7 vote with three excused, will allow Oregonians to obtain a short-term driver card from the Driver and Motor Vehicle Services division (DMV), leading to more accountability for these drivers on Oregon roads.

"It's all about public safety. Right now, we have a dangerous situation because many drivers aren't able to get any sort of certification from the DMV," said Senator Chip Shields (D-Portland). "Passing SB 833B is the right thing to do in order to ensure all Oregon drivers on our roads have the proper training and skills to drive safely."

Currently, Oregon requires driver license applicants to produce foundational documents that verify the person's identity and proof of legal presence. SB 833B will allow for an alternative process to obtain a state-issued 'driver card,' which proves driving privileges but cannot be used as proof of identity. Applicants must reside in Oregon for at least 1 year, and must meet all other requirements of a driver's license. Driver cards issued under SB 833B will be valid for four years, rather than the eight-year validity period for a standard driver license. Whether a driver holds a license or a card, Oregon law requires liability insurance once they are on the road.

"Offering short-term driver cards will save lives and reduce costs for drivers who are impacted by currently-uninsured and -unlicensed drivers," said Senator Lee Beyer (D-Springfield), chair of the Senate Business and Transportation Committee. "SB 833B will enable more Oregonians get to their jobs, and providing a lawful avenue for them will help make all of us more safe."

Business and agricultural communities, law enforcement, and advocacy groups for low-income Oregonians have come together in support of SB 833B.

"These Oregonians need to get to work, get to the store, and take their children to school. SB 833B gives them an opportunity to get to the places they need to go in a safe and accountable way," said Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland). "Ultimately our state will benefit from increased safety and productivity."

In 2008, the Oregon Legislature passed SB 1080, which instituted the requirement that driver license applicants provide proof of U.S. citizenship or lawful presence in the country in order to comply with federal REAL ID standards. That would remain the case if SB 833B becomes law, as the new driver card may only be used to provide evidence of driving privileges, identify the person as an organ donor or veteran, and provide a driver identification number to law enforcement.

SB 833B will now go the Oregon House of Representatives for a vote.

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