



Legislative Update

Remember last year when the State of Florida raised the driver's license fee's and the taxes on your vehicles? Well, there is a Bill moving thru both the Florida Senate (SB 2036) and the Florida House (HB 99) that would decrease these fees and taxes to the previous level.

With last year's decision to raise the fees, renewing a driver's license went from \$20 to \$48 and registering a new car jumped from \$100 to \$225. Lawmakers also boosted the amount of money going to the state from the sale of specialty license plate from \$14 to \$33, meaning that with organizations collecting between \$15 to \$25 per plate, a specialty plate could cost nearly \$60.

In addition to returning the prices to previous levels, SB 2036 would also credit drivers who paid the higher fees between Sept. 1, 2009 and August 2010. You did read that correctly, you would get a credit if you paid the higher fees.

Why the change of heart? State transportation officials have told lawmakers that registrations have been off about 1.5% and specialty tag sales fell 67% statewide in November through January!

Stiffer Penalties Bill Update

Our House Bill CS/HB 875 "Traffic Offenses" (ABATE's "Stiffer Penalties Bill") is now in Public Safety & Domestic Security Policy Committee. This is a great time to call your Representative to let them know that you, a member of ABATE of Florida, supports this Bill and wants them to vote favorably for this.

Below are a list of the members of this Committee. We strongly encourage your Chapter Legislative Trustee to call your area Representatives if they are on this list. Your Chapter Legislative Trustee should know if any of these are from your area.

If one of these Legislators is from your area, call them, let them know that you are a member of ABATE of FL, and ask for their support of CS/HB 875 in the upcoming committee meeting.

[Ambler, Kevin C. \(R\)](#)

[Adams, Sandra \(R\)](#)

[Evers, Greg \(R\)](#)

[Ray, Lake \(R\)](#)

[Stargel, Kelli \(R\)](#)

[Hooper, Ed \(R\)](#)

[Bernard, Mackenson \(D\)](#)

[Heller, Bill \(D\)](#)

[Robaina, Julio \(R\)](#)

[Waldman, James W. \(D\)](#)

[Garcia, Luis R. \(D\)](#)

[Drake, Brad \(R\)](#)

[Holder, Doug \(R\)](#)

[Rouson, Darryl Ervin \(D\)](#)

Texting While Driving Bills Update

A Florida Senate committee approved three bills regarding texting while driving a motor vehicle with varying levels of restrictions. The Senate Transportation Committee did not decide yesterday which of the measures (SB 448, 244 and

324) was too hot and which was too cold. Rather than picking one course in a single bill, the panel approved all three.

The most stringent of the measures, SB 244 by Sen. Frederica Wilson (D-Miami) would ban all cell phone use in cars without hands-free devices, while the least restrictive, SB 324 by Sen. Carey Baker (R-Eustis) would limit the ban to drivers under 17. The third measure, SB 448 by Sen. Nancy Deter, was amended to ban using cell phones for texting or e-mail for all drivers, but punishable only if the driver is first pulled over for something else. That may have been done to win support from lawmakers reluctant to impose restrictions on personal behavior.

Having each been approved by the Transportation Committee, the texting measures will all next go to Communications, Energy, and Public Utilities and Transportation and Economic Development Appropriations committees, where they may possibly be combined.

Miscellaneous Bills Update

Just a few miscellaneous Bills that are moving through the legislature that might be of interest to you who enjoy fishing and those that enjoy a smoke in the privacy of your own car. These are not motorcycle related in any way (unless you sit on your bike while fishing or smoke while taking your children for a ride on your motorcycle).

SALTWATER FISHING FEE NOT A KEEPER, SENATE THROWING IT BACK

Last year the Legislature instituted a fishing license requirement for people to fish from the shore or beach, which had never been required before. The \$7.50 fee was expected to be paid by about 120,000 anglers. It wasn't very popular, and the Senate Ways and Means Committee on Thursday approved a Bill (SB 1514) to repeal it.

SMOKING IN CARS WITH KIDS

The House Roads, Bridges and Ports Committee may continue a workshop on a Bill (HB 1411) that would allow enhanced penalties for drivers who are pulled over for something, and then found to be smoking in their car with kids in the car. The bill is sponsored by Rep. Kevin Ambler (R-Tampa), and is obviously controversial for its implications on the rights of government to control personal behavior.

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