

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 93
By: Ellis
Transportation
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties assert that the driver responsibility program was created over ten years ago to help fill a budget shortfall and to encourage people to drive more responsibly by requiring drivers convicted of certain traffic offenses to pay annual surcharges to maintain their driver's licenses. Failure to pay the surcharges results in an automatic license suspension.

There is concern that, while the program has provided needed funding, it has created more problems than it has fixed. The parties assert that the program has generated far less revenue than anticipated, has not improved public safety, and has increased financial hardships for low-income families. In addition, the parties note, the program has led to more uninsured drivers on the road because of the millions of licenses that have been suspended under the program. S.B. 93 seeks to address this issue.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 93 repeals a provision of the Transportation Code providing for the automatic suspension of a person's driver's license for failure to pay a surcharge under the driver responsibility program or to enter into an installment payment agreement within a certain period after being sent a second notice that a surcharge has been assessed on the person's driver's license. The bill amends the Transportation Code to remove the requirement that the Department of Public Safety send a third notice to a person who has failed to pay such a surcharge or enter into an installment payment agreement within that period advising the person that the person's driving privileges are suspended. The bill removes provisions establishing that a person's license is automatically suspended if such a surcharge or a related cost is paid by credit card and the amount is subsequently reversed by the issuer of the credit card and that a license suspended due to such reversal remains suspended until the person pays the amount of the surcharge and any related costs.

S.B. 93 repeals Section 708.152, Transportation Code.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2015.