

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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H.B. 504
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Transportation & Homeland Security
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S/SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Current law attempts to curb the use of technologically advanced products designed to obscure information on license plates to defeat photo radar and enforcement cameras. When the current law became effective on September 1, 2003, some law enforcement agencies interpreted the measure to prohibit a wide array of license plate brackets.

H.B. 504 specifies that the use of certain license plate brackets is no longer an offense under the Texas Transportation Code. In particular, the bill specifies that a license plate bracket is lawful if at least one-half of the name of the state in which the vehicle is registered is visible, and if the letters and numbers of the license plate are unobscured.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 502.409, Transportation Code, by amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (c), as follows:

(a) Provides that a person commits an offense if the person attaches to or displays on a motor vehicle number plate or registration insignia that has blurring or reflective matter that impairs the readability of the name of the state in which the vehicle is registered or the letters or number of the license plate number at any time, or if the person has a coating, covering, or protective material that alters or obscures one-half or more of the name of the state in which the vehicle is registered. Deletes existing text prohibiting letters, numbers, or other identification marks that, because of blurring or reflective matter, are not plainly visible at all times during daylight, and prohibiting obscuring another original design feature of the plate. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

(b) Provides that it is an exception to the prohibition on altering or obscuring one-half or more of the name of the state in which the vehicle is registered if the device that alters or obscures the name of the state is a transponder as defined by Section 224.158.

SECTION 2. Makes application of this Act prospective.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2005.