



OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

Bill Analysis

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S.B. 48

132nd General Assembly
(As Introduced)

Sens. Williams, Thomas, Yuko, Beagle, Skindell, Schiavoni, Brown, Hite, Tavares

BILL SUMMARY

- Creates a special license plate that persons with a hearing impairment may voluntarily request to identify the vehicle as being owned or leased by a person with a hearing impairment.
 - Allows a person with a hearing impairment to request the Registrar of Motor Vehicles to include an identifying symbol on the person's driver's license, commercial driver's license, or state identification card.
 - To obtain either the special license plate or the identifying symbol on a license or identification card, requires a signed statement by a person's personal physician certifying that the person has a hearing loss of 40 decibels or more in one or both ears.
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CONTENT AND OPERATION

Special license plate for persons with a hearing impairment

The bill creates a special license plate for persons with a hearing impairment that may be voluntarily obtained at the time of registration of a motor vehicle that is owned or leased by the person. The Registrar of Motor Vehicles is required to design the special license plate, which must include an identifiable letter, number, or design in addition to the letters and numbers ordinarily included on license plates. The identifiable letter, number, or design is intended to alert a law enforcement officer that the person operating the motor vehicle has a hearing impairment. In order to obtain the special license plate, the application for the special license plate must be accompanied

by a signed statement from the applicant's personal physician certifying that the applicant has a hearing loss of 40 decibels or more in one or both ears.¹

Notation on a driver's license or state identification card

The bill also requires an application for any of the following licenses or identification cards to include whether the applicant has a hearing impairment (i.e. has a hearing loss of 40 decibels or more in one or both ears) and whether the applicant wishes the license or identification card to indicate that the holder has a hearing impairment:

(1) A commercial driver's license, restricted commercial driver's license, or a commercial driver's license temporary instruction permit;²

(2) A driver's license, motorcycle operator's license or endorsement, or motor-driven cycle or motor scooter license or endorsement;³ or

(3) A state identification card.⁴

If the applicant wishes to indicate that the applicant has a hearing impairment and the applicant presents a signed statement from the applicant's personal physician certifying that the applicant has a hearing loss of 40 decibels or more in one or both ears, the Registrar must make a notation on the license or identification card with a symbol chosen by the Registrar to indicate that the person has a hearing impairment.⁵

Sun visor identification card under current law

A related provision of current law allows a person with a hearing impairment to apply for a special identification card from the Registrar that identifies the person as hearing impaired. The card is approximately the size of a motor vehicle sun visor and may be attached to the sun visor. It contains the heading "Identification Card for the Hearing-impaired Driver" along with the name and signature of the hearing-impaired person to which it was issued, an identifying number, and instructions on the actions the person with a hearing impairment should take or refrain from taking if the person is stopped by a law enforcement officer. To be eligible for the card, the person must have a

¹ R.C. 4503.441.

² R.C. 4506.07(A)(9).

³ R.C. 4507.06(A)(1)(h).

⁴ R.C. 4507.51(A)(1)(c).

⁵ R.C. 4506.11(A)(13), 4507.13(A)(2)(j), and 4507.52(A)(6).

hearing loss of 40 decibels or more in one or both ears, which is the same threshold for eligibility for the special license plate or identifying symbol on the person's driver's license or state identification card under the bill.⁶

HISTORY

ACTION	DATE
Introduced	02-14-17

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⁶ R.C. 4507.141.

