

Regional News – May 24, 2013

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2013 Standing Committee Vacancies

Each of AAMVA's three standing committees have vacancies beginning September 2013. If you are interested in applying for membership, please download the [Committee Member Application](#). Applications must be received by **August 1, 2013**. If you have questions, please contact Dianne Graham, director, Member & Conference Services via email dgraham@aamva.org or phone (703) 908-8267. For more information, see <http://www.aamva.org/Committees-and-Working-Groups/>.

Region I News

Connecticut House Green Lights Driver's Licenses for Undocumented Immigrants

Connecticut voters may not be ready, but that didn't stop the House from pushing forward with a vote on a bill that would give undocumented immigrants the ability to obtain a driver's license. After more than seven hours of debate the House passed the measure 74 to 55 around 5:45 a.m. [Read the full article in the New Haven Register.](#)

D.C. Council Chairman Seeks Shift in Collecting Fuel Taxes

D.C. Council Chairman Phil Mendelson will ask his colleagues Wednesday to repeal the city's 23.5 cent-a-gallon gasoline tax and replace it with an 8.3 percent tax on wholesale gas and diesel purchases. The proposed shift, inserted into Mayor Vincent C. Gray's 2014 budget proposal, would shift the onus of paying fuel taxes from consumers to businesses. But fuel distributors would almost certainly pass those costs on to customers. [Read the full article in the Washington Post.](#)

DMV Warns Residents about Phone Scam; Says it Never Gives out Contact Information (Delaware)

Delaware's Department of Motor Vehicles says residents are being targeted by a phone scam. The DMV says residents have been getting automated phone calls offering them savings on their car insurance. [Read the full article in the Washington Post.](#)

Lawsuit Filed Over Vanity Plate Restrictions (New Hampshire)

Vanity plates are very popular in New Hampshire, but there are restrictions on what can be expressed on the plates. Now, a man is taking the state to court over what he believes is an imposition on his free speech. The Department of Motor Vehicles refused to issue a plate to a Dover man in 2010 that read "COPSLIE," calling the text "insulting." The DMV cited a state statute that says a vanity plate can't be "ethnically, racially (insulting) or which a reasonable person would find offensive to good taste." [Read the full article on wmur.com.](#)

Christie Administration Announces Reforms to Placard and License Plate Program for Persons with a Disability to Better Serve Clients in Need (New Jersey)

The Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC) today announced upcoming changes to the parking privileges law for persons with a disability and a new procedure for issuing wheelchair symbol placards and license plates so that persons with a disability can find a designated parking space when they need it. [Read the full article on state.nj.us](#)

Region II News

Louisiana Bill Would Ban Drivers From Reading Tweets

In Louisiana, you're not allowed to text while driving, but nothing in the law says that a motorist can't tweet, check in with friends on Facebook, or post photos on Instagram. That may soon change. Louisiana lawmakers are advancing legislation that aims to close a social media "loophole" in the state's laws against distracted driving. The bill, which passed the lower chamber Thursday, "prohibits any device from being used to access, read, or post to a social networking site while operating a motor vehicle and requires tests administered to driver's license applicants include the applicant's knowledge of distracted driving issues." Those caught would face fines up to \$500, reports the Times-Picayune. The measure still needs to be approved by the Senate. [Read the full article in the Wall Street Journal.](#)

Governor Announces Birthday License Plate (West Virginia)

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin encourages West Virginians to show their state pride with a 150th birthday license plate. The Division of Motor Vehicles is offering the plate as an alternative standard issuance plate option to West Virginia passenger vehicle owners during 2013, the state's 150th birthday year. [Read the full article in the Inter Mountain.](#)

Region III News

Truckload of Concerns after Lawmakers OK Higher Speed Limit (Illinois)

Illinois drivers soon could roll along rural interstates at 70 mph after House lawmakers Wednesday approved a higher speed limit on nonurban highways despite safety concerns and a possible veto showdown with the governor. Supporters said the higher speeds would place Illinois - home to some of the nation's busiest interstates - in line with neighboring states. Opponents contend the move would lead to more fatalities, especially in crashes between cars and trucks - and burn more fuel. [Read the full article in the Chicago Tribune.](#)

GOP Bill Would Block Ohio Driver's Licenses for Immigrants in Obama's Amnesty Program

Republican state legislators are seeking to take away driver's licenses from unauthorized immigrants who have been granted temporary amnesty by the federal government. A bill slated for committee discussion today would reverse a state Bureau of Motor Vehicles policy requiring administrators to issue temporary licenses for immigrants who fall under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals initiative. The BMV clarified its policy in March after a rash of complaints that some of the bureau's private contractors were turning DACA immigrants away. [Read the full article in the Columbus Dispatch.](#)

Hartley Retires From Highway Patrol (South Dakota)

Major Randy Hartley is retiring after 25 years with the South Dakota Highway Patrol, Col. Craig Price said today. Hartley started with the Highway Patrol in 1988 at Presho. He also served as a trooper in Brookings before being promoted to sergeant in 1999 and transferring to Rapid City. He received promotions to lieutenant in 2003 and then captain in 2006, serving as commander of the Rapid City district. [Read the full article in South Dakota State News.](#)

Region IV News

Fann Bill Allows Businesses to Process Driver's Licenses (Arizona)

A new law aims to pave the way for the state to tighten its driver's license application process while also giving people more options. Rep. Karen Fann, R-Prescott, sponsored House Bill 2183 and Gov. Jan Brewer has signed it. While the legislation makes numerous changes to state laws relating to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), its main thrust is to allow private businesses to process driver's licenses, said Kevin Biesty, government relations director for the Arizona Department of Transportation. [Read the full article in the Daily Courier.](#)

California Drivers with Smartphones Beware!

A court ruling in California states that checking smartphones while driving is now a punishable offense. The court ruling states the any driver is prohibited to use a wireless telephone, unless it is designed to be voice operated or allow hand-free operation. Because of this, many smartphone developers are frantically conjuring up ways and methods to bypass this rule and the only solution was to improve their voice operation ability. [Read the full article in the Pentagon Post.](#)

Drivers with Disabled Placards May Have to Pay at Meters in SF (California)

Under a new proposal backed by city leaders, motorists with disabled placards would have to pay for parking and be subject to time limits at meters. Drivers with a blue placard can park for free at any space in The City and they are not subject to any time limits. [Read the full article in the San Francisco Examiner.](#)

Madera Woman Sentenced for Issuing Fake IDs (California)

United States District Judge Lawrence J. O'Neill sentenced Rosemary Fierros, 47, of Madera, today to four years in prison, United States Attorney Benjamin B. Wagner announced. A federal jury found her guilty in February 2013 of 31 counts in a conspiracy to sell official California drivers licenses to ineligible individuals. [Read the full article on turnto23.com.](#)

Assembly Approves Bill Easing Commutes for Clean Car Drivers (California)

The California State Assembly approved legislation authored by Assemblymember Bob Blumenfield (D-San Fernando Valley) that rewards Californians for purchasing clean or zero-emission vehicles by giving them a pass for congestion free commuting on highway carpool lanes or carpool lanes converted to toll roads. Assembly Bill (AB) 266 passed with a 49-22 vote and moves to the State Senate for further review. [Read the full article in the Van Nuys News Press.](#)

Hawaii Governor Signs Statewide Distracted Driving Law

Governor Neil Abercrombie has into law House Bill 980, enacted as Act 74, which becomes effective July 1, 2013. While all counties in the state have some form of a distracted driving ordinance in place, the Act

establishes a state law that creates consistent requirements across all counties for the use of mobile electronic devices while driving and thus simplifies enforcement. [Read the full article on HR.BLR.com](#)

Governor Signs Seat Belt Bill into Law, Effective Immediately (Hawaii)

With representatives of the state Departments of Transportation and Health, county police departments and traffic safety advocates standing in support, Gov. Neil Abercrombie signed into law Monday two significant traffic safety bills that he says will save lives and reduce serious injuries from motor vehicle crashes in Hawaii. [Read the full article at kitv.com.](#)

Nevada Senate Kills Special License Plate Bill

In a rare vote that killed a bill, the Senate late Monday evening on a 10-11 vote rejected an Assembly-approved bill that would have limited the designs charitable groups can place on special license plates. Assembly Bill 243 was among only four bills that have been killed this session, which has just two weeks to go, according to Senate Secretary David Byerman. [Read the full article in the Las Vegas Review-Journal.](#)

State Senators Approve Bill for Driver Authorization Cards (Nevada)

On a 20-1 vote, state senators on Monday passed a bill that would allow people who are not in the country legally to acquire driver authorization cards. Under the bill, they would have to pass a driving test before they could acquire the card, which cannot be used for identification purposes. The annual fee for renewing the driver's card is \$18.50. Four states, including Utah and New Mexico, already allow people who are not in the U.S. legally to drive. [Read the full article in the Las Vegas Review-Journal.](#)

State Legislators See Benefits of Driver Authorization Cards (Nevada)

Denis, the Democratic majority leader from Las Vegas, and Ruben Kihuen, D-Las Vegas, said that ever since they were freshmen legislators their constituents have pleaded for legislation allowing people who are in the country illegally to acquire legal driver's licenses. What they came up with was Senate Bill 303, a driver's authorization card bill that is supported by the Republican and Democratic leaders of both houses and by Gov. Brian Sandoval. [Read the full article in the Las Vegas Review-Journal.](#)

Lawmakers OK Funding to Cut Wait Times at DMV (Nevada)

The lines at the Department of Motor Vehicles might be getting shorter soon. A new system will allow customers to check their wait-time status remotely via computer, cellphone or other mobile device. It takes effect July 1. Lawmakers on Saturday approved using \$2.3 million in highway funds to maintain 25 previously temporary DMV counter positions approved by the Interim Finance Committee. That will prevent the average wait time at DMV's six metropolitan offices from increasing and maintain the resources in Elko and Winnemucca offices needed to keep pace with population growth and increased mining activity, a staff analysis showed. [Read the full article in the Nevada Appeal.](#)

Law Limits Who Can Use Fake Driver's Licenses, Plates (Washington)

Gov. Jay Inslee on Tuesday signed into law a measure giving legislative approval to a state program that has already issued hundreds of fake driver's licenses and license plates to law-enforcement and government agencies. The measure limits the distribution of the undercover licenses and plates to undercover or covert officers engaged in "law-enforcement activities," and Inslee said that the law, which takes effect immediately, gives "legislative direction and parameters" on how the program can now be used. [Read the full article in the Seattle Times.](#)

Washington Passes Tougher Law Against Drunken Boating (Washington)

Washington's boating under the influence law becomes tougher under a law signed Thursday by Washington Gov. Jay Inslee. The biggest change makes BUI a gross misdemeanor punishable by up to a year in jail and a \$5,000 fine. [Read the full article in the Oregonian.](#)

Did You Know...

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- *Memorial Day used to be called Decoration Day - to honor the deceased, soldiers would decorate graves of their fallen comrades with flowers, flags and wreaths.*
- *Although Memorial Day became its official title in the 1880s, the holiday wouldn't legally become Memorial Day until 1967.*
- *In December 2000, Congress passed a law requiring Americans to pause at 3 p.m. local time on Memorial Day to remember and honor the fallen.*
- *Waterloo, NY is considered the birthplace of Memorial Day. According to the town's website, in 1966 Congress unanimously passed a resolution to officially recognize Waterloo as the birthplace of the holiday. However, it remains a contentious debate, with other towns, like Boalsburg, Pa., claiming the title of "Birthplace of Memorial Day" as well.*

AAA Travel projects 34.8 million Americans will journey 50 miles or more from home during the Memorial Day holiday weekend, a 0.9 percent decrease from the 35.1 million people who traveled last year.