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STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 85th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony in Support of Assembly Bills 715, 716, and 926

Assembly Committee on Transportation

February 10th, 2022

Chairman Plumer and members of the Committee:

Thank you for taking the time to allow me to testify on a number of bills today.

Assembly Bill 715 was drafted with assistance from the Department of Transportation (DOT) after the Department was approached by U.S. Army Wisconsin Recruiting Command. Army officials informed the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) that recent changes in certain specialized military training programs which require an individual to, at the time of application, possess a valid driver's license which will not expire between the date of application and the anticipated completion of the training program. Military enlistees typically have probationary driver's licenses that expire while in basic training or during specialized training after basic. This bill fixes an issue for military members by allow the DMV to issue "regular" driver's licenses to individuals enlisted in the armed forces. This bill, will allow the Department to assist the approximately, 1,200 to 1,500 annual Armed Forces residents in Wisconsin looking to enter the training programs of their choice.

Assembly Bill 716 was also drafted with assistance from the DOT. The bill eliminates DMV's statutory obligation to issue paper temporary plates and allows DMV to require electronic issuance of temporary plates. Allowing the Department to shift to temporary electronic plates modernizes state statutes to reflect best practices as temporary paper plates are not tied to the owner of a vehicle after the car is sold. The elimination of DMV's obligation to issue paper temporary plates under this bill will allow DMV to complete its transition to requiring electronic issuance of temporary plates. Electronic temporary plates are printed by the dealer or the vehicle owner following issuance. DMV has stopped distributing cardboard plates and this change will align the law with current practices. Electronic temporary plates were implemented for private vehicle sales in 2011 and motor vehicle dealers have been issuing temporary license plates electronically since 2019.

Assembly Bill 926 allows the use signal priority devices on traffic signals for snowplows. Currently, emergency preemption devices are placed on some traffic signals allowing authorized emergency vehicles to transmit a signal to traffic lights to change the normal light sequence and either extend a green light or change a red light to green. This allows emergency vehicles to quickly and safely proceed through intersections without getting stuck at red lights. Signal priority is a similar technology that allows snowplows to request a green light be provided or maintained to allow the vehicle time to travel through the intersection by requesting extra green time to proceed through the intersection to improve

efficiencies during winter maintenance operations and provide safe travel to the motoring public. Current statutes classify signal priority under emergency preemption devices and therefore limit their use to emergency vehicles. However, given that snowplows require different prioritization than emergency vehicles we think that creating a new level of priority for them would help increase traffic flow and snowplowing efficiency. This technology is already in use in Illinois and Utah and a study in Minnesota found increased efficiency associated with signal priority for snowplows.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my testimony today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.



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To: Chairman Plumer and members of the Committee

From: Joel Nilsestuen, Assistant Deputy Secretary

Date: February 10, 2022

RE: Assembly Bill 715 relating to exemptions from the requirement that an original driver's license be a probationary license

Thank you, Chairman Plumer and committee members for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Assembly Bill 715 on behalf of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

Currently, new drivers in Wisconsin are issued "Probationary" driver licenses which expire three years after issuance. For individuals enlisting in the military immediately after graduation from high school, their driver licenses typically expire while they are in basic training or a longer duration specialized training. This creates problems since they cannot return to Wisconsin to change their products.

The Department was made aware of this problem when it was approached by the Army's Wisconsin Recruiting Command. Army officials informed DMV of changes in application requirements for specialized military training programs which require the individual at the time of application to possess a valid driver license which will not expire between the date of application and the anticipated completion of the training program.

To solve this concern, this bill would allow Wisconsin DMV to issue a "Regular" driver license to individuals who provide documentation of enlistment in the U.S. Armed Forces

Through this proposal, the Department will be able to assist Wisconsin residents enlisting in the U.S. Armed Forces in entering the training programs of their choice. This number is estimated to be between 1,200 and 1,500 annually,

Thank you again for the time and opportunity to provide this testimony today. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.