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WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

Senate Bill 639: Exceptions from probationary licenses

November 3, 2021

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and committee members and thank you for taking the time to hear Senate Bill 639, creating exceptions to the probationary license requirement for members of the military.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) was approached by leadership from the Army's Wisconsin Recruiting Command. Army officials informed the Division of Motor Vehicles of recent changes in application requirements for 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.

Currently, new drivers in Wisconsin are issued "Probationary" driver's licenses which expire three years from issuance. For individuals enlisting in the military immediately after graduation from high school (age 18+/-), their driver's licenses typically expire while they are in basic training or longer duration specialized training.

The expiration of Probationary driver's licenses poses a problem for Wisconsin residents who choose to join the military. This bill solves this concern by allowing the Division of Motor Vehicles to issue a "Regular" driver's license to individuals who provide documentation of enlistment in the U.S. Armed Forces. Through this bill, the Department will be able to assist Wisconsin residents, estimated to be between 1,200 and 1,500 annually, enlisting in the U.S. Armed Forces in entering the training programs of their choice.

Thank you again for hearing this bill today, and I would be happy to answer any questions.

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**Testimony of Assistant Deputy Secretary Joel Nilsestuen before the Senate Committee on
Transportation and Local Government on Senate Bill 639
November 3, 2021**

Thank you Chairman Petrowski and members of the committee for the opportunity to speak for informational purposes on Senate Bill 639.

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 opportunity to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.