

HB 167 -- DRIVER'S LICENSE EXAMINATIONS

SPONSOR: Nolte

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Transportation by a vote of 8 to 3.

This bill requires Missouri driver's license examinations to only be administered in English so that the applicant can demonstrate his or her ability to sufficiently understand highway traffic signs and safety warnings. The Director of the Department of Revenue cannot supply or permit the use of language interpreters in connection with the required written and driving tests.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2012, FY 2013, and FY 2014.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill is a safety measure designed to ensure that those driving on Missouri roads can understand traffic signs, safety warnings, and communicate with emergency personnel and law enforcement.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Nolte; and Honorable Randy Terrill, Oklahoma House of Representatives.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that the bill, by impeding an immigrant's ability to drive, presents an obstacle for a legal immigrant to assimilate into United States society by removing the immigrant's ability to maintain a normal lifestyle. The bill does nothing to ensure that all drivers understand English because foreign visitors are allowed to drive using their home country license while visiting Missouri.

Testifying against the bill were Assurant Incorporated; State Farm Insurance Companies; Missouri Insurance Coalition; American Insurance Association; The Travelers Companies, Incorporated and Subsidiaries; Vanessa Crawford, Missouri Immigrant and Refugee Advocates and Jewish Community Relations Council of St. Louis; Anthony Weigel, American Immigration Lawyers Association; Father Chuck Tobin, St. Sabina Catholic Church; American Civil Liberties Union - Eastern Missouri; Lynda Callon, Westside Community Action Network; Missouri Catholic Conference; Catholic Charities Archdiocese of St. Louis; Jean Stemmermann; and Gerardo Arenivas; Missouri Association for Social Welfare.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill explained the current driver testing program and the resources in place to conduct the examinations.

Testifying on the bill was State Highway Patrol.