



House of Representatives

File No. 909

General Assembly

January Session, 2025

(Reprint of File No. 767)

Substitute House Bill No. 7132
As Amended by House Amendment
Schedule "A"

Approved by the Legislative Commissioner
May 12, 2025

**AN ACT CONCERNING NON-SAFETY-RELATED TRAFFIC STOPS,
DRIVING WHILE CONSUMING CANNABIS AND EXCESSIVE
RECKLESS DRIVING.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General
Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsections (a) to (c), inclusive, of section 14-18 of the
2 general statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
3 thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

4 (a) (1) Each motor vehicle for which one number plate has been issued
5 shall, while in use or operation upon any public highway, display in a
6 conspicuous place at the rear of such vehicle the number plate. The
7 commissioner may issue a sticker denoting the expiration date of the
8 registration. Such sticker shall be displayed in such place on the vehicle
9 as the commissioner may direct. Such sticker may contain the
10 corresponding letters and numbers of the registration and number plate
11 issued by the commissioner.

12 (2) Each motor vehicle for which two number plates have been issued
13 shall, while in use or operation upon any public highway, display such
14 number plates in a conspicuous place at (A) the front, and (B) the rear
15 of such vehicle, [the number plates] which may include against a
16 vehicle's rear window, provided the numerals and letters on any such
17 number plate are plainly legible. The commissioner may issue a sticker
18 denoting the expiration date of the registration. Such sticker shall be
19 displayed in such place on the vehicle as the commissioner may direct.
20 Such sticker may contain the corresponding letters and numbers of the
21 number plate issued by the commissioner.

22 (b) Repealed by 1969, P.A. 247, S. 1.

23 (c) Official number plates when displayed upon motor vehicles shall
24 be [entirely] substantially unobscured and the numerals and letters
25 [thereon] on such plates shall be plainly legible at all times. Such number
26 plates shall be horizontal [,] and shall be fastened so as not to swing.
27 [and, during the time when a motor vehicle is required to display lights,
28 the rear number plate shall be so illuminated as to be legible at a distance
29 of fifty feet.] Nothing may be affixed to a motor vehicle or to the official
30 number plates displayed on such vehicle that obscures or impairs the
31 visibility of [any information] the numerals and letters on such number
32 plates. Not more than one number plate shall be displayed on the front
33 or rear of any motor vehicle in operation upon the public highways of
34 the state; provided any motor vehicle may, upon permission of the
35 commissioner, display more than one number plate in front or rear,
36 subject to such conditions as the commissioner prescribes. If any
37 number plate supplied by the commissioner is lost, or if the registered
38 number [thereon] on such plate becomes mutilated or illegible, the
39 owner of or the person in control of the motor vehicle for which such
40 number plate was furnished shall immediately place a temporary
41 number plate bearing said registration number upon such motor
42 vehicle, which temporary number plate shall conform to the regular
43 number plate and shall be displayed as nearly as possible as [herein]
44 provided in this section for such regular number plate; and such owner
45 shall, within forty-eight hours after such loss or mutilation of the

46 number plate, give notice thereof to the commissioner and apply for a
47 new number plate. The commissioner may issue a permit to operate
48 with such temporary plate and shall supply new number plates upon
49 payment of the fee therefor as provided in section 14-50a. Upon receipt
50 of such new number plates and new certificate, the remaining old
51 number plate, if any, and certificate shall be surrendered to the
52 commissioner. As used in this subsection, "substantially unobscured"
53 means that the number plate is not significantly blocked or concealed by
54 an obstacle or obstruction, to an extent that allows for a reasonable
55 person or an electronic device capable of recording data on, or taking a
56 photograph of, a motor vehicle or such motor vehicle's number plate to
57 read the numerals and letters of such plate.

58 Sec. 2. Section 14-96a of the general statutes is repealed and the
59 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

60 (a) Every vehicle upon a highway within this state shall display such
61 lighted lamps and illuminating devices as may be required under the
62 provisions of this section and sections [14-96a] 14-96b to 14-96aa,
63 inclusive, (1) at any time from a half-hour after sunset to a half-hour
64 before sunrise, (2) at any time when, due to insufficient light or
65 unfavorable atmospheric conditions, persons and vehicles on the
66 highway are not clearly discernible at a distance of five hundred feet
67 ahead, and (3) at any time during periods of precipitation, including,
68 but not limited to, periods of snow, rain or fog.

69 (b) Whenever in said sections any requirement is declared as to
70 distance from which certain lamps and devices shall render objects
71 visible or within which such lamps or devices shall be visible, such
72 requirement shall apply during the times stated in subsection (a) of this
73 section in respect to a vehicle without load when upon a straight, level,
74 unlighted highway under normal atmospheric conditions unless a
75 different time or condition is expressly stated.

76 (c) Whenever in said sections any requirement is declared as to the
77 mounted height of lamps or devices, such requirement shall mean the

78 height measured from the center of such lamps or devices to the level
79 ground upon which the vehicle stands when such vehicle is without a
80 load.

81 (d) Failure to [provide lighted] illuminate lamps and illuminating
82 devices at such time as required by this section shall be an infraction.

83 (e) To the extent that a violation concerning the number, placement
84 or intensity of a lamp or illuminating device, or any other technical
85 specification provided in sections 14-96b to 14-96aa, inclusive,
86 concerning a lamp or illuminating device would constitute a violation
87 under this section, such violation shall be enforced under section 14-96b,
88 14-96c, as amended by this act, 14-96d, 14-96e, 14-96f, 14-96g, 14-96i, 14-
89 96j, 14-96k, 14-96l, 14-96m, 14-96n, 14-96o, 14-96p, 14-96q, 14-96r, 14-96s,
90 14-96t, 14-96u, 14-96x, 14-96y, as amended by this act, 14-96z or 14-96aa,
91 and not under this section.

92 Sec. 3. Section 14-96c of the general statutes is repealed and the
93 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

94 (a) After October 1, 1967, every motor vehicle, trailer, semitrailer and
95 pole trailer, and any other vehicle which is being drawn at the end of a
96 combination of vehicles, shall be equipped with at least two tail lamps
97 mounted on the rear, which, when lighted as required in subsection (a)
98 of section 14-96a, as amended by this act, shall emit a red light plainly
99 visible from a distance of one thousand feet to the rear, except that
100 passenger cars manufactured or assembled prior to October 1, 1957, and
101 motorcycles shall have at least one such tail lamp. On a combination of
102 vehicles, only the tail lamps on the rearmost vehicle need actually be
103 seen from the distance specified. On vehicles equipped with more than
104 one tail lamp, the lamps shall be mounted on the same level and as
105 widely spaced laterally as practicable.

106 (b) Every tail lamp upon every vehicle shall be located at a mounted
107 height of not more than seventy-two inches nor less than fifteen inches.

108 (c) The rear registration plate shall be so illumined with a white light

109 as to render it clearly legible from a distance of fifty feet to the rear. Any
110 tail lamp or tail lamps, together with any separate lamp or lamps for
111 illuminating the rear registration plate, shall be so wired as to be lighted
112 whenever the head lamps or auxiliary driving lamps are lighted, except
113 that any vehicle equipped by the manufacturer with daytime running
114 lamps which meet federal requirements may have such daytime
115 running lamps illuminated without illumination of the tail lamps or rear
116 registration plate.

117 (d) Failure to have tail lamps [or failure to illuminate the rear
118 registration plate] as required in this section shall be an infraction.

119 Sec. 4. Section 14-96y of the general statutes is repealed and the
120 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

121 (a) At all times specified in subsection (a) of section 14-96a, as
122 amended by this act, at least two lighted lamps shall be displayed, one
123 on each side at the front of every motor vehicle other than a motorcycle,
124 except when such vehicle is parked subject to the regulations governing
125 lights on parked vehicles.

126 (b) Whenever a motor vehicle equipped with head lamps as [herein]
127 required by this section is also equipped with any auxiliary lamps or a
128 spot lamp or any other lamp on the front thereof projecting a beam of
129 intensity greater than three hundred candlepower, not more than a total
130 of four of any such lamps on the front of a vehicle shall be lighted at any
131 one time when upon a highway.

132 (c) [Failure to have] Any operator of a motor vehicle that does not
133 have at least two lamps as required by this section shall be deemed to
134 have committed an infraction, except that if such motor vehicle has at
135 least one such lamp, such operator shall be issued a warning for
136 defective equipment under the provisions of subsection (c) of section 14-
137 103 for a first offense, and for any subsequent violation of this section,
138 such operator shall be deemed to have committed an infraction.

139 Sec. 5. Section 14-99f of the general statutes is repealed and the

140 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

141 (a) Each motor vehicle shall be equipped with a windshield of a type
142 prescribed by section 14-100 and a windshield cleaner or wiper in
143 effective working order located directly in front of the operator while in
144 use on the highway. The windshield shall be reasonably free of defects
145 and accumulations, inside and out, of snow, ice, condensation and dirt.
146 The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to a motorcycle or a
147 vehicle designed by the manufacturer for nonhighway operation
148 without a windshield.

149 (b) No person shall operate a motor vehicle required to be equipped
150 with such a windshield if the windshield is in a condition to interfere
151 with an unobstructed view of the highway in a manner that significantly
152 blocks or conceals by use of an obstacle or obstruction to an extent that
153 would prevent a reasonable person from viewing the highway.

154 (c) No article, device, sticker or ornament shall be attached or affixed
155 to or hung on or in any motor vehicle in such a manner or location as to
156 interfere with the operator's unobstructed view of the highway in a
157 manner that significantly blocks or conceals by use of an obstacle or
158 obstruction to an extent that would prevent a reasonable person from
159 viewing the highway or to distract the attention of the operator.

160 (d) Violation of any provision of this section shall be an infraction.

161 Sec. 6. Subsection (a) of section 14-12 of the general statutes is
162 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
163 *1, 2025*):

164 (a) No motor vehicle shall be operated, towed or parked on any
165 highway, except as otherwise expressly provided, unless it is registered
166 with the commissioner, provided any motor vehicle may be towed for
167 repairs or necessary work if it bears the number plates of a licensed and
168 registered dealer, manufacturer or repairer and provided any motor
169 vehicle which is validly registered in another state may, for a period of
170 ninety days following establishment by the owner of residence in this

171 state, be operated on any highway without first being registered with
172 the commissioner. Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, (1) a
173 person commits an infraction if such person (A) registers a motor
174 vehicle [he or she] such person does not own, or (B) operates, allows the
175 operation of, parks or allows the parking of an unregistered motor
176 vehicle on any highway, or (2) a resident of this state who operates or
177 parks a motor vehicle such resident owns with number plates issued by
178 another state on any highway shall be fined two hundred fifty dollars,
179 except that the fine shall be suspended for a first time violator who
180 presents proof of registration for the motor vehicle subsequent to the
181 violation but prior to the imposition of a fine. If the owner of a motor
182 vehicle previously registered with the commissioner, the registration of
183 which expired not more than [thirty] sixty days previously, operates,
184 allows the operation of, parks or allows that parking of such a motor
185 vehicle, such owner shall be fined the amount designated for the
186 infraction of failure to renew a registration, but the right to retain his or
187 her operator's license shall not be affected. No operator other than the
188 owner shall be subject to penalty for the operation or parking of such a
189 previously registered motor vehicle. As used in this subsection, the term
190 "unregistered motor vehicle" includes any vehicle that is not eligible for
191 registration by the commissioner due to the absence of necessary
192 equipment or other characteristics of the vehicle that make it unsuitable
193 for highway operation, unless the operation of such vehicle is expressly
194 permitted by another provision of this chapter or chapter 248.

195 Sec. 7. Section 53a-213a of the general statutes is repealed and the
196 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

197 (a) A person is guilty of smoking, otherwise inhaling or ingesting
198 cannabis, as defined in section 21a-420, while operating a motor vehicle
199 when he or she smokes, otherwise inhales or ingests cannabis, as
200 defined in section 21a-420, while operating a motor vehicle upon a
201 public highway of this state or upon any road of any specially chartered
202 municipal association or of any district organized under the provisions
203 of chapter 105, a purpose of which is the construction and maintenance
204 of roads and sidewalks, or in any parking area for ten cars or more, or

205 upon any private road on which a speed limit has been established in
206 accordance with the provisions of section 14-218a or upon any school
207 property. No person shall be convicted of smoking or otherwise
208 inhaling or ingesting cannabis while operating a motor vehicle and
209 possessing or having under such person's control a controlled substance
210 upon the same transaction. A person may be charged and prosecuted
211 for either or each such offense, a violation of operating a motor vehicle
212 while under the influence of any drug and any other applicable offense
213 upon the same information.

214 (b) Smoking, otherwise inhaling or ingesting cannabis while
215 operating a motor vehicle is a class C misdemeanor.

216 (c) No peace officer shall stop a motor vehicle for a violation of this
217 section if such violation is the sole reason for such stop, unless such
218 officer (1) observes active cannabis consumption by the operator of the
219 motor vehicle, and (2) detects the odor of burnt cannabis.

220 Sec. 8. Section 53a-213b of the general statutes is repealed and the
221 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

222 (a) A person is guilty of smoking or otherwise inhaling or ingesting
223 cannabis, as defined in section 21a-420, in a motor vehicle when he or
224 she smokes or otherwise inhales or ingests cannabis in a motor vehicle
225 that is being operated by another person upon a public highway of this
226 state or upon any road of any specially chartered municipal association
227 or of any district organized under the provisions of chapter 105, a
228 purpose of which is the construction and maintenance of roads and
229 sidewalks, or in any parking area for ten cars or more, or upon any
230 private road on which a speed limit has been established in accordance
231 with the provisions of section 14-218a or upon any school property. No
232 person shall be convicted of smoking or otherwise inhaling or ingesting
233 cannabis as a passenger in a motor vehicle and possessing or having
234 under such person's control a controlled substance upon the same
235 transaction, but such person may be charged and prosecuted for both
236 offenses upon the same information.

237 (b) Smoking or otherwise inhaling or ingesting cannabis in a motor
238 vehicle is a class D misdemeanor.

239 (c) No peace officer shall stop a motor vehicle for a violation of this
240 section if such violation is the sole reason for such stop, unless such
241 officer (1) observes active cannabis consumption by the operator of the
242 motor vehicle, and (2) detects the odor of burnt cannabis.

243 Sec. 9. Section 14-222 of the general statutes is repealed and the
244 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

245 (a) (1) No person shall operate any motor vehicle upon any public
246 highway of the state, or any road of any specially chartered municipal
247 association or of any district organized under the provisions of chapter
248 105, a purpose of which is the construction and maintenance of roads
249 and sidewalks, or in any parking area for ten cars or more or upon any
250 private road on which a speed limit has been established in accordance
251 with the provisions of section 14-218a or section 14-307a or upon any
252 school property recklessly, having regard to the width, traffic and use
253 of such highway, road, school property or parking area, the intersection
254 of streets and the weather conditions. The operation of a motor vehicle
255 upon any such highway, road or parking area for ten cars or more at
256 such a rate of speed as to endanger the life of any person other than the
257 operator of such motor vehicle, or the operation, downgrade, upon any
258 highway, of any motor vehicle with a commercial registration with the
259 clutch or gears disengaged, or the operation knowingly of a motor
260 vehicle with defective mechanism, shall constitute a violation of the
261 provisions of this [section] subsection. The operation of a motor vehicle
262 upon any such highway, road or parking area for ten cars or more at a
263 rate of speed greater than eighty-five miles per hour but not greater than
264 one hundred miles per hour shall constitute a violation of the provisions
265 of this [section] subsection.

266 [(b)] (2) Any person who violates any provision of [this section]
267 subdivision (1) of this subsection shall be fined not less than one
268 hundred dollars nor more than three hundred dollars or imprisoned not

269 more than thirty days or be both fined and imprisoned for the first
270 offense and for each subsequent offense shall be fined not more than six
271 hundred dollars or imprisoned not more than one year or be both fined
272 and imprisoned.

273 (b) (1) No person shall operate any motor vehicle upon any public
274 highway of the state, or any road of any specially chartered municipal
275 association or of any district organized under the provisions of chapter
276 105, a purpose of which is the construction and maintenance of roads
277 and sidewalks, or in any parking area for ten cars or more or upon any
278 private road on which a speed limit has been established in accordance
279 with the provisions of section 14-218a or 14-307a or upon any school
280 property at a rate of speed greater than one hundred miles per hour.

281 (2) Any person who violates subdivision (1) of this subsection shall
282 be fined not less than two hundred dollars nor more than six hundred
283 dollars or imprisoned not more than thirty days or be both fined and
284 imprisoned for the first offense and for each subsequent offense shall be
285 fined not more than one thousand dollars or imprisoned not more than
286 one year or be both fined and imprisoned.

287 (3) Any police officer who arrests a person for a violation of
288 subdivision (1) of this subsection, who has previously been convicted of
289 a violation of subdivision (1) of this subsection, shall cause the motor
290 vehicle such person was operating at the time of the current offense to
291 be impounded for a period of forty-eight hours after such arrest. The
292 owner of such motor vehicle may reclaim such motor vehicle after the
293 expiration of such forty-eight-hour period upon payment of all towing
294 and storage costs.

295 (c) No person shall be subject to prosecution because of the same
296 offense for a violation of both (1) subsection (a) or (b) of this section, and
297 (2) subsection (a) of section 14-219.

298 Sec. 10. Subsection (d) of section 14-219 of the general statutes is
299 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
300 *1, 2025*):

301 (d) No person shall be subject to prosecution because of the same
302 offense for a violation of both (1) subsection (a) of this section, and (2)
303 subsection (a) or (b) of section 14-222, as amended by this act. [because
304 of the same offense.]

305 Sec. 11. Section 14-81b of the general statutes is repealed and the
306 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

307 The term "brake drum", as used in this section, means the individual
308 cupped metal drums to which motor vehicle wheels are each attached
309 and against whose interior surface, brake shoe pressure is applied to
310 effect stopping, holding or control of forward or backward vehicle
311 movement. The term "brake disc" as used in this section, means the
312 parallel faced circular rotational member to which motor vehicle wheels
313 are each attached and against whose exterior surface, brake lining
314 pressure is applied to effect stopping, holding or control of forward or
315 backward movement. No person, firm or corporation shall service, turn,
316 grind, install, sell, give or offer for sale for passenger or commercial
317 motor vehicle use any used brake drum or brake disc which exceeds
318 wear limits established in accordance with regulations adopted by the
319 commissioner. Any person, firm or corporation which performs or
320 permits any violation of this section shall be subject to the penalties
321 provided in subsection [(b)] (a) of section 14-222, as amended by this act.

322 Sec. 12. Subsection (b) of section 14-111 of the general statutes is
323 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
324 *1, 2025*):

325 (b) (1) Except as provided in subdivision (2) or (3) of this subsection,
326 whenever the holder of any motor vehicle operator's license has been
327 convicted or has forfeited any bond taken or has received a suspended
328 judgment or sentence for any of the following violations, the
329 commissioner shall, without hearing, suspend such person's operator's
330 license or privilege to operate a motor vehicle in this state as follows:
331 For a first violation of subsection (a) or subdivision (1) of subsection (b)
332 of section 14-224 or section 14-110, 14-215 or 53a-119b, for a period of

333 not less than one year and, for a subsequent violation thereof, for a
334 period of not less than two years; for a violation of [subsection (a) of]
335 section 14-222, as amended by this act, or subsection (c) of section 14-
336 224, for a period of not less than thirty days or more than ninety days
337 and, for a subsequent violation thereof, for a period of not less than
338 ninety days; for a violation of subdivision (2) or (3) of subsection (b) of
339 section 14-224, for a period of not less than ninety days and for a
340 subsequent violation thereof, for a period of not less than one year; for
341 a first violation of subsection (b), (d) or (e) of section 14-147, for a period
342 of not less than ninety days and, for a subsequent violation thereof, for
343 a period of not less than five years; for a first violation of subsection (c)
344 of section 14-147, for a period of not less than thirty days and, for a
345 subsequent violation thereof, for a period of not less than one year.

346 (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 14-111b and except as
347 provided in subdivision (3) of this subsection, whenever the holder of
348 any motor vehicle operator's license or youth instruction permit who is
349 less than eighteen years of age or whenever a person who does not hold
350 an operator's license who is less than eighteen years of age has been
351 convicted or has forfeited any bond taken or has received a suspended
352 judgment or sentence for any of the following violations, the
353 commissioner shall suspend such person's operator's license or
354 privilege to obtain an operator's license as follows: For a first violation
355 of subdivision (4) of subsection (a) of section 14-219 or subdivision (4)
356 of subsection (b) of section 14-219, for a period of sixty days and, for a
357 second violation thereof, for a period of ninety days and, for a third or
358 subsequent violation thereof, for a period of six months; for a first
359 violation of [subsection (a) of] section 14-222, as amended by this act, for
360 a period of six months and, for a subsequent violation thereof, for a
361 period of one year; for a violation of subsection (c) of section 14-224, for
362 a period of six months and, for a subsequent violation thereof, for a
363 period of one year; for a first violation of section 14-296aa, for a period
364 of thirty days and, for a second violation thereof, for a period of ninety
365 days and, for a third or subsequent violation thereof, for a period of six
366 months.

367 (3) The commissioner shall suspend the motor vehicle operator's
368 license of any youth adjudged a youthful offender for a violation of
369 section 14-215 or 14-222, as amended by this act, subsection (b) of section
370 14-223 or subdivision (2) or (3) of subsection (b) or subsection (c) of
371 section 14-224 for six months for a first offense and one year for a second
372 or subsequent offense.

373 (4) Whenever any person who has not been issued a motor vehicle
374 operator's license under section 14-36 is convicted of a second or
375 subsequent violation of subsection (a) of section 14-36: (A) The
376 commissioner shall suspend such person's privilege to operate a motor
377 vehicle, (B) such suspension shall remain in effect for a period of ninety
378 days, and (C) the commissioner shall not issue an operator's license to
379 such person under section 14-36 until such period of suspension has
380 expired and all applicable requirements for such license have been
381 satisfied by such person.

382 Sec. 13. Section 14-219b of the general statutes is repealed and the
383 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

384 Nothing in section 14-218a [, subsection (a) of section] or 14-222, as
385 amended by this act, or subsection (a) of section 14-227a shall be
386 construed to impose any liability upon any municipality as a result of
387 its establishing a speed limit upon any private road within its
388 jurisdiction as provided by section 14-218a.

389 Sec. 14. Section 54-1q of the general statutes is repealed and the
390 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

391 The court shall not accept a plea of guilty or nolo contendere from a
392 person in a proceeding with respect to a violation of section 14-110,
393 subsection (b), (c), (d) or (e) of section 14-147, section 14-215, [subsection
394 (a) of] section 14-222, as amended by this act, subsection (a) or (b) of
395 section 14-224 or section 53a-119b unless the court advises such person
396 that conviction of the offense for which such person has been charged
397 may have the consequence of the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles
398 suspending such person's motor vehicle operator's license.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	14-18(a) to (c)
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	14-96a
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	14-96c
Sec. 4	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	14-96y
Sec. 5	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	14-99f
Sec. 6	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	14-12(a)
Sec. 7	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	53a-213a
Sec. 8	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	53a-213b
Sec. 9	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	14-222
Sec. 10	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	14-219(d)
Sec. 11	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	14-81b
Sec. 12	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	14-111(b)
Sec. 13	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	14-219b
Sec. 14	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	54-1q

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
State Revenues	Various - Potential Revenue Loss	See Below	See Below
Judicial Dept. (Probation)	GF - Potential Cost	Minimal	Minimal
Resources of the General Fund	GF - Potential Revenue Gain	Minimal	Minimal

Note: Various=Various; GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill decreases the standard for what constitutes certain license plate, headlight, or windshield equipment violations, which results in a potential decrease in revenue to the state from fines.¹

The bill also allows officers to stop motor vehicles for violating laws against using cannabis in a vehicle which results in a potential cost to the Judicial Department for probation and a potential revenue gain to the General Fund from fines.² On average, the marginal cost for supervision in the community is less than \$600³ each year for adults and

¹ In FY 24, there were 2,732 charges recorded and \$73,150 in associated revenue collected under CGS §§ 14-18(a)(2), 14-96y, and 14-99f.

² In FY 24, there were 5 charges recorded and \$250 in associated revenue collected under CGS §§ 53a-213a and 53a-213b.

³ Probation marginal cost is based on services provided by private providers and only includes costs that increase with each additional participant. This does not include a cost for additional supervision by a probation officer unless a new offense is anticipated to result in enough additional offenders to require additional probation officers.

\$450 each year for juveniles.

The bill creates an unclassified misdemeanor for driving above 100 mph which results in a potential cost to the Judicial Department for probation and a potential revenue gain to the General Fund from fines. The bill makes various other changes to motor vehicle violations laws that are not anticipated to result in a fiscal impact to the state or municipalities.

House "A" alters the underlying bill by creating unclassified misdemeanors and making technical and conforming changes resulting in the impact described above.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to the actual number of violations and infractions.

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 7132 (as amended by House "A")******AN ACT CONCERNING NON-SAFETY-RELATED TRAFFIC STOPS AND DRIVING WHILE CONSUMING CANNABIS.*****SUMMARY**

This bill makes several changes to motor vehicle violation laws. First, the bill decreases the standard for what constitutes certain license plate, headlight, or windshield equipment violations.

Secondly, it sets enhanced penalties under the reckless driving law for violators who drive faster than 100 mph.

The bill also allows an officer to stop a motor vehicle for a violation of the laws against using cannabis in a vehicle if the officer sees the operator actively consuming cannabis and smells burnt cannabis.

Additionally, it extends, from 30 days to 60 days, the grace period after a motor vehicle registration expires during which a violation is considered "failure to renew" and subject to only an infraction penalty and not a potential driver's license suspension (§ 6).

Lastly, the bill makes technical and conforming changes.

*House Amendment "A" adds the provisions on enhanced reckless driving penalties.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025

VEHICLE EQUIPMENT VIOLATIONS***License Plate Display***

By law, vehicles issued two license plates must display them in a conspicuous place on the vehicle's front and rear. The bill allows for the rear plate to be displayed in the rear window as long as the plate's numbers and letters are plainly legible.

The bill also lessens the standard for what is considered obscuring license plates. Current law requires plates to be entirely unobscured and prohibits placing anything on a vehicle or license plate that obscures any information on the plate. The bill instead (1) requires that a plate be substantially unobscured, meaning that an obstruction does not significantly block or conceal it in a way that prevents a reasonable person or an electronic device that records data on or photographs a vehicle or its plate from reading the plate, and (2) prohibits placing anything that obscures the plate's numbers and letters, rather than any information on the plate.

It also eliminates the specific infraction penalty for failing to illuminate the rear license plate with a white light that makes it clearly legible from 50 feet away. Vehicles with these violations may still be stopped and issued a warning for defective equipment, which by law requires the vehicle owner to have the vehicle taken to an inspection station and restored to safe operating condition within the next 10 days (CGS § 14-103).

Headlights and Other Required Lights

Existing law requires motor vehicles other than motorcycles to have two working headlights, one on each side of the vehicle's front, when being driven at certain times (e.g., nighttime or when it's raining or foggy). Not doing this is an infraction. But under the bill, if the vehicle has one working headlight, the operator must receive a defective equipment warning for a first offense (subsequent offenses remain infractions).

It also requires violations of laws on the number, placement, and intensity of lights or other technical specifications included in the equipment laws that would also be a violation of the use of lights while driving statute (CGS § 14-96a) to be enforced under the equipment statutes and not under the use of lights law.

Windshield Obstructions

Current law generally prohibits (1) operating a motor vehicle when

the condition of its windshield interferes with an unobstructed view of the road and (2) attaching, placing, or hanging a device, sticker, or ornament on or in a vehicle in a way or location that obstructs the driver's view or distracts the driver.

The bill specifies that, in these cases, the windshield's condition or obstruction must significantly block or conceal the driver's view, as measured by what a reasonable person could see. By law, these violations are infractions.

ENHANCED RECKLESS DRIVING PENALTIES

Under current law, driving faster than 85 mph is considered a reckless driving violation. The bill sets enhanced penalties under the reckless driving law for violators who drive faster than 100 mph (see table below).

Table: Reckless Driving Penalties Under Bill

<i>Driving Faster Than 85 mph and up to 100 mph (Existing Law)</i>	
First offense	\$100-\$300 fine, up to 30 days imprisonment, or both
Subsequent offense	Up to \$600 fine, up to 364 days imprisonment, or both
<i>Driving Faster Than 100 mph</i>	
First offense	\$200-\$600 fine, up to 30 days imprisonment, or both
Subsequent offense	Up to \$1,000 fine, up to 364 days imprisonment, or both

Under the bill, if a police officer arrests someone for a reckless driving violation of driving faster than 100 mph who was previously convicted of this violation, the officer must impound the driver's vehicle for a 48-hour period. After this period, the vehicle owner may reclaim it upon paying all related towing and storage costs.

The bill also specifies that a person cannot be prosecuted for both speeding and reckless driving for the same offense.

As under the existing reckless driving law, the bill's prohibition on driving faster than 100 mph applies to (1) public roads; (2) roads of specially chartered municipal associations or districts organized under the laws for special taxing districts, a purpose of which is building and

maintaining roads and sidewalks; (3) parking areas for at least 10 cars; (4) private roads with speed limits established by the local traffic authority according to law; and (5) any school property.

CANNABIS USE IN VEHICLES

By law, it is a class C misdemeanor to smoke, otherwise inhale, or ingest cannabis while driving a motor vehicle on certain roads or properties, and a class D misdemeanor to do these things as a motor vehicle passenger. However, current law prohibits peace officers (e.g., state and local police) from stopping a vehicle solely for these violations. The bill allows them to do so if the officer sees the driver actively consuming cannabis and smells burnt cannabis odor.

A class C misdemeanor is punishable by up to three months in prison, a fine of up to \$500, or both, and a class D misdemeanor is punishable by up to 30 days in prison, a fine of up to \$250, or both.

BACKGROUND

Infractions

Infractions are punishable by fines, usually set by Superior Court judges, of between \$35 and \$90, plus a \$20 or \$35 surcharge and an additional fee based on the fine's amount. There may be other added charges depending upon the type of infraction. For example, certain motor vehicle infractions trigger a Special Transportation Fund surcharge of 50% of the fine. An infraction is not a crime, and violators can generally pay the fine by mail without making a court appearance.

Related Bill

sHB 7260 (File 787), reported favorably by the Judiciary Committee, has similar provisions on driving faster than 100 mph ("excessive reckless driving") and setting higher penalties for violators.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 40 Nay 1 (04/07/2025)