



SB 486 – DMV Appointments

Senator Melissa Melendez

Background

In 2005, the REAL ID Act required state governments to comply with a maximum of an eight year driver license renewal standard.

In California, each original driver's license expires every five years. This has been law since AB 2352 (Speier) (Chapter 1043, Statutes of 1996) increased the renewal period from four to five years.

Currently, nineteen other states, including New York, have a driver license renewal period for eight years or longer. Michigan State Representative Kosowski, has introduced legislation in his state to extend the driver license renewal period from four to eight years.

Problem Being Addressed

The DMV serves California's near 30 million licensed drivers by issuing and renewing licenses. Notwithstanding various other reasons someone may visit the DMV and the effects of implementing AB 60, California has some of the longest wait times in the nation. Pre-COVID 19, California's wait times were an average of 48 minutes. This wait time is significantly greater than the nation's average of 34 minutes.

The State of California has now been in a pandemic related lock down for more than a year. COVID-19 has changed the way we do a lot of things in our every-day life. During these extraordinary times, the DMV has easily provided extensions and capabilities to digitally renew ones license online or through the mail. The DMV originally expanded this eligibility for drivers 69 and under who had licenses expired during the emergency. As of December 6, 2020, eligibility to take advantage of not going physically into a DMV branch to renew a non-commercial license was expanded to include drivers 70 years and older. The DMV's [website](#) suggests these capabilities will end for everyone when the pandemic ends.

Which code section is affected?

An act to amend Sections 12814.5 and 12816 of the Vehicle Code, relating to vehicles.

Summary

SB 486 will extend the driver license renewal period from the current five years to eight years for those between the ages of 25 to 70. Ages outside of that range will remain in the five year license renewal period. Overall, this bill aims to decrease the frequency of Californian's visits to the DMV. COVID-19 has shown us that we have the technology to provide renewals digitally in order to keep people safe from a novel virus. California should build on this by providing an additional three years prior to having to renew a driver license.

Staff Contact

Hannah Ackley – Hannah.Ackley@sen.ca.gov