



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
House of Representatives
State House, Boston 02133-1054

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Legislature Passes Motor Vehicle License Suspension Bill

BOSTON – Representative Todd M. Smola (R-Warren, Ranking Member, Committee on Ways & Means) joined his colleagues at the State House to approve final passage of *An Act relative to motor vehicle license suspension*.

This bill repeals the current law which subjects individuals convicted of a non-violent drug offense to an automatic license suspension for up to five years and a license reinstatement fee of \$500, even if the offense does not involve motor vehicles in any way. Thirty-four states, including every other New England state, have already taken action to repeal similar laws.

The bill will have no effect on license suspension penalties for driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, and only removes the outdated state requirement that penalizes every drug offense with a license suspension, even for non-driving offenses. It will also allow anyone previously subject to this provision to have their license reinstated without a fee.

“This bill delivers important reforms to our criminal justice system,” said Representative Smola. “It will help non-violent offenders who have paid for their mistakes, re-enter society by enabling them attend appointments like rehabilitation meetings, court dates and job interviews.”

In recognition of the ongoing opioid crisis and the danger of highly addictive stimulants, members of the conference committee included language that would maintain automatic suspensions for trafficking heroin, fentanyl, and cocaine. The compromise also maintains a pathway for reformed convicts to receive temporary licenses for education or employment purposes, while holding the Registry of Motor Vehicles accountable for any denials.

The bill was signed by Governor Charlie Baker at the State House on Wednesday.

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