

Date of Hearing: May 17, 2023

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Chris Holden, Chair

AB 1606 (Gipson) – As Amended April 26, 2023

Policy Committee: Transportation Vote: 15 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: No Reimbursable: No

**SUMMARY:**

This bill authorizes, but does not require, the director of the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to establish a program to evaluate the traffic safety and other effects of renewing driver's licenses by virtual or other remote processes. The bill specifies that such a program would need to require every individual 80 years of age or older to come into a field office to renew their driver's license.

The bill requires the DMV, on or before January 1, 2034, to submit a report to the Legislature on the program. The bill is to remain in effect until January 1, 2035.

**FISCAL EFFECT:**

Cost pressure of a significant amount, likely in excess of \$150,000, for DMV to develop, consider and adopt regulations to implement this bill (Motor Vehicle Account (MVA)). Because the bill does not require DMV to undertake this work, DMV could schedule this regulatory effort for 2026 or beyond so that it does not coincide with DMV's IT modernization efforts, thereby avoiding costs DMV has attributed to so many other bills.

DMV notes this bill may eliminate approximately one million visits to DMV offices each year, thereby resulting in substantial administrative savings, should DMV act on the authority provided to it by this bill.

**COMMENTS:**

Existing law prescribes how and how often a person must renew their driver's license. The law requires a person to renew their driver license every five years. Existing law allow DMV to permit renewal of a driver's license twice every fifteen years, though it prohibits DMV from authorizing renewal by mail for a person 70 years of age or older, a person who has negative operation points on their license or a person with certain driving related convictions.

In October of 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom, acting under emergency powers in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, temporarily waived the statutory requirement that a driver 70 years or older renew their driver's licenses at a DMV field office. Subsequently, SB 174 (Budget), Chapter 254, Statutes of 2021, suspended the requirement that an individual 70 years or older renew their license in-person every five years and allowed such a driver to renew their driver's license online.

This ability of a senior to renew their driver's license online ended January 1, 2023. The author would like seniors to again have this option. According to the author:

This bill is necessary in order to provide our elderly community with other options that do not include having to go in person to the DMV. Having online services available and accessible to seniors over the age of 70, will save them the trouble of driving to the DMV and waiting long periods of time for a process that can be done quickly and easily through the internet or by mail. It will also protect at-risk seniors with weak immune systems, from potentially exacerbating their health conditions through unneeded travel. This bill will overall increase customer convenience and reduce the number of DMV visits.

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