

Assemblymember Steve Bennett

37th Assembly District



AB 771: Waiving Driver's License Fees: People Experiencing Homelessness

SUMMARY

Assembly Bill (AB) 771 would waive the driver's license renewal fee for people experiencing homelessness.

BACKGROUND

In 2019, California had the third largest homeless population in the country with 151,278 individuals. That's an almost 17% increase from the previous year, and 2020 data is projected to be even higher. Furthermore, people experiencing homelessness are overrepresented in California. The state's general population makes up the 12% of the United States population, while our homeless population represents 23% of the country's homeless population.

Of the 151,278 individuals who experience homelessness in California, more than 16,500 of them live in their vehicles. To accommodate these individuals, there are several Safe Parking programs that are offered throughout the state.

The purpose of these programs is to provide safe overnight parking to people experiencing vehicular homeless. Programs like those in Santa Barbara and Los Angeles counties offer additional services including food distribution, job tutoring, resume preparation, and a "rapid rehousing" element that helps individuals' transition into permanent housing.

Without access to Safe Parking programs, individuals will park wherever they deem safe and stay there overnight. Doing this puts them at a higher risk of being confronted by police and if their driver's license is expired, they risk being fined. Individuals experiencing vehicular homelessness are faced with the unique situation of being responsible for accrued parking debt that can lead to them losing their primary mode of transportation and their home. Losing their vehicle would mean losing everything they own, rendering them unsheltered unless they can afford to

get their car back and renew their driver's license.

THIS BILL

AB 771 would require waiving the driver's license renewal fees for people who can verify their status as someone that is experiencing homelessness. Additionally, people who are experiencing homelessness and are applying for renewal will not be charged a fee to verify their eligibility, as is the case with identification cards. Fee waivers already exist for identification cards, and this bill simply extends the same process to driver's licenses.

SUPPORT

OPPOSITION

CONTACT

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