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Three Unpaid Parking Tickets? No License!

By KEN BRAUN | July 27, 2010

Motorist with three or more unpaid parking tickets at one time should be looking warily over their shoulder at what state politicians are doing with legislation that has cleared the Michigan House but come to a stall in the Senate.

House Bill 4726, sponsored by Rep. Roy Schmidt, D-Grand Rapids, would have the Secretary of State deny a driver license renewal to any motorist with as few as three unpaid parking tickets. The bill cleared the Michigan House last October on a vote of **68-37**. But on June 30, when it was brought up for a final passage vote in the Senate, the chamber overwhelmingly rejected it with a vote of **14-23**.

A motion to reconsider the defeat was then adopted, allowing the Senate to try another vote at a later date.

Under current law, a local court may refer a motorist with six or more unpaid parking violations to the Michigan Secretary of State. Once alerted, the SOS may not issue a driver license renewal until the person has paid all outstanding parking ticket balances and late fees and paid a \$45 "driver license clearance fee." The Schmidt bill would reduce this threshold to three unpaid tickets.

The real issue appears to be money for municipal governments.

Albert C. Mooney, Grand Rapids City Treasurer, submitted [supportive testimony](#) regarding HB 4726 to the House committee that first looked at the bill during October 2009. Noting that the city then had more than \$3.5 million in uncollected parking fines, he predicted that passage of the bill would boost collections by as much as \$500,000 for the first year and then provide more than \$250,000 in additional collections for each year after that.

Summarizing the bill's intent, Mooney states at the outset that "The proposal is very straight forward - the bill helps cash strapped local units by using existing technology to collect parking fines."

James C. Walker of Ann Arbor, representing the [National Motorists Association](#), submitted testimony expressing his group's opposition to the proposal. Most pointedly, he asserted that the bill would be an expansion of the "punitive regulations" that came with the so-called "[driver responsibility fees](#)" imposed by the Legislature in 2003.

"The Responsibility Fees are a very poor law which led to thousands and thousands of unlicensed and uninsured drivers in the state of Michigan," wrote Walker. "Parking tickets have no relationship to driving safety."

According to Walker, demanding that otherwise safe drivers pay parking tickets as a precondition for getting their driver license renewed will instead result in many impoverished motorists that decide to drive without a valid license. His group believes that the current policy of cutting off renewals after six unpaid parking tickets is already "bad law."

"Refusing to renew a person's driver's license for non-payment of three parking tickets can have a very negative effect on public safety," he said.

Unlicensed drivers hitting the roads anyway appears to have been exactly what has happened with the driver responsibility fees. Many lawmakers are now ready to admit that creating the fees was an error. In June of this year, the Michigan Senate began taking testimony on a bill aimed at [repealing some of the bad driver fees](#).

"They are excessive and punitive," said Michigan Sen. Cameron Brown, R-Fawn River Twp., to the Gongwer News Service (www.gongwer.com, subscription only). "They were among the worst decisions our class of lawmakers have voted on and enacted into law."

Brown, one of the lawmakers voting to create the fees in the first place, is now sponsoring a bill to repeal \$45 million in annual driver responsibility fees.

Berrien County Circuit Court Judge Charles LaSata, also a former lawmaker who voted for the driver responsibility fees, testified to a senate committee that defendants in his court were willfully driving without licenses, and without insurance, and deliberately risking additional fines. He suspects this is happening because these drivers could not afford the added financial burden of the fees, but still need to get to work and go on with their lives.

Oakland County Clerk Ruth Johnson is a former member of the Michigan House who voted against the driver responsibility fees because she thought them "unfair." "bad law," and motivated purely by state government's desire to "find a pocket to get into."

Walker of the National Motorists Association offered better alternatives for cities that wish to recover their delinquent parking ticket revenue.

"Towing the vehicle or increasing the late payment fees are fine," he said. "But refusing to renew a driver's license is not appropriate."

Regarding the unlicensed drivers already prowling Michigan's roads, he noted that "We do not need to add even one more."

The Michiganvotes.org roll call votes for House Bill 4726 are noted below. Contact information for all lawmakers is available at www.MichCapCon.com/9313.

Lawmakers who voted TO BLOCK DRIVER LICENSE RENEWAL FOR THREE UNPAID PARKING TICKETS:

HOUSE REPUBLICANS (28)				
Ball	Bolger	Booher	Caul	Crawford
DeShazor	Elsenheimer	Haines	Hansen	Haveman
Hildenbrand	Jones, Rick	Knollenberg	Kowall	Lori
Lund	Marleau	Meltzer	Moore	Moss
Pavlov	Pearce	Proos	Rogers	Schmidt, W.
Schuitmaker	Tyler	Walsh		
SENATE REPUBLICANS (9)				
Birkholz	Bishop	Cassis	Cropsey	Garcia
Jelinek	Richardville	Stamas	Van Woerkom	
HOUSE DEMOCRATS (40)				
Angerer	Brown, T.	Byrnes	Clemente	Constan
Corriveau	Coulouris	Cushingberry	Dean	Donigan
Ebli	Espinoza	Geiss	Gonzales	Haase
Hammel	Haugh	Huckleberry	Kandrevas	Kennedy
LeBlanc	Leland	Lemmons	Lindberg	Lipton
Liss	Mayes	McDowell	Meadows	Melton
Neumann	Polidori	Schmidt, R.	Scripps	Sheltrown
Slavens	Slezak	Spade	Switalski	Womack
SENATE DEMOCRATS (5)				
Basham	Gleason	Jacobs	Olshove	Prusi

Lawmakers who voted AGAINST BLOCKING DRIVER LICENSE RENEWAL for three unpaid parking tickets:

HOUSE REPUBLICANS (14)				
Agema	Amash	Calley	Daley	Denby
Genetski	Horn	Kurtz	McMillin	Meekhof
Opsommer	Rocca	Scott, P.	Stamas	
SENATE REPUBLICANS (12)				
Allen	Brown	George	Gilbert	Hardiman
Jansen	Kahn	McManus	Nofs	Pappageorge
Patterson	Sanborn			
HOUSE DEMOCRATS (23)				
Barnett	Bauer	Bledsoe	Brown, L.	Byrum
Durhal	Gregory	Griffin	Jackson	Johnson
Jones, Robert	Lahti	Miller	Nathan	Roberts
Scott, B.	Segal	Smith	Stanley	Tlaib
Valentine	Warren	Young		
SENATE DEMOCRATS (11)				
Anderson	Barcia	Brater	Cherry	Clark-Coleman
Clarke	Hunter	Scott	Switalski	Thomas
Whitmer				

Lawmakers who DID NOT VOTE:

[Sen. Kuipers \(R\)](#)

[Rep. Bennett \(D\)](#) [Rep. Dillon \(D\)](#) [Rep. Green \(R\)](#) [Rep. Nerat \(D\)](#) [Rep. Simpson \(D\)](#)

House Roll Call 501 on HB 4726

Senate Roll Call 338 on HB 4726

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U-M Graduate Students Blue Over Unionization

Are graduate student research assistants at a public university students. ... or government employees? Several hundred GSRA's, many represented by the Mackinac Center Legal Foundation, U-M deans, faculty and the president object to this movement to unionize. A bill to clarify that students are students and not entitled to unionize awaits the governor's signature.

skimTRACKER

**WHILE PEOPLE WAIT FOR THE SENATE,
SEIU TAKES \$28M AND COUNTING
FROM MICHIGAN HOME HEALTH CARE AIDES**

[clock1]

Skimmed Since 2007

[clock2]

Skimmed Since Arrival in MI Senate in June 2011

The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) "organized" Michigan's self-employed home health aides for the purpose of skimming dues from their ailing and disabled clients' Medicaid subsidy checks.

The first counter tallies SEIU dues skimmed since the union and state officials first launched this scheme in 2007. The second shows the amount skimmed since June 9, 2011, when the Michigan House passed and sent to the Senate a bill to ban this and all similar "stealth unionization" efforts.

For more information, visit:

"GOP Senator Tries to Save SEIU Healthcare 'Employer'"

Video: "The SEIU in Michigan: Home Health Aides"

<http://www.michiganvotes.org/2011-HB-4003>

"Forced Unionization" Brings In \$28 Million For SEIU ... And Climbing

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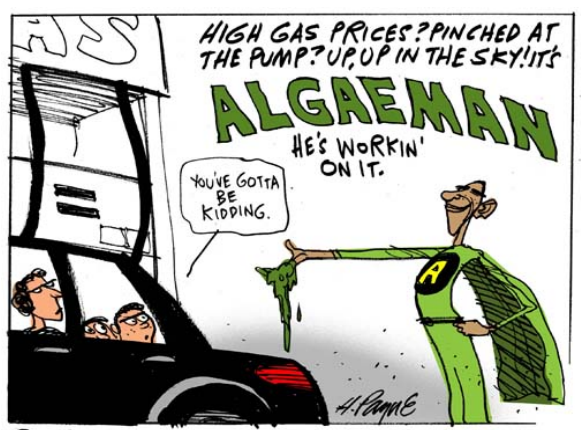
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