

## **Legislature 2007: Two bills to curb driving by illegal immigrants clear committee**

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution  
February 2, 2007 Friday, Main Edition

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The Atlanta Journal-Constitution  
aje.com

**Section:** METRO NEWS; Pg. 4D

**Length:** 414 words

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### **Body**

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**Two bills** that would make it harder for **illegal immigrants** to drive in Georgia **cleared** a Senate **committee** Thursday after one legislator tried to stamp a father's face on the issue.

Sen. John Douglas (R-Social Circle) asked members of the Senate Public Safety and Homeland Security **Committee** to consider the 42-year-old father of six who was killed Tuesday on I-85 in Coweta County. Terrance Harvey, of Forest Park, died after an unlicensed driver who was in the country illegally slammed into his stalled car.

"The six children now fatherless ... will be deprived of the most important male role model they could have had," he said. "All because someone here illegally was driving illegally."

Douglas' **bill** --- SB 25 --- would increase the fine from \$1,000 to \$5,000 for motorists who use fake documents to obtain an auto tag or driver's license in Georgia. Violators already face jail time of one to five years. Anyone who aids in such fraud would face the same penalty under the **bill**.

A companion **bill** (SB 38) also passed by the **committee** Thursday would require motorists to present a Georgia driver's license or Georgia ID when obtaining their registration and license plate, even if they've just arrived in the state. Both forms of identification require applicants to prove they're in the country legally.

In most counties, people who claim they've moved to Georgia within the past 30 days can use a foreign or out-of-state driver's license to secure their auto tag and registration. Some metro Atlanta tag offices accept foreign passports as well.

Sen. Chip Rogers (R-Woodstock), sponsor of SB 38, said that system allows people without Georgia driver's licenses or insurance to drive roads undetected. His **bill** would exempt military personnel, out-of-state college students and several other special cases.

Sen. Emanuel Jones (D-Decatur), who refrained from voting because he owns three auto dealerships, said he feared the measures could put car salespeople at too great a risk for prosecution. Fake documents are rampant

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and sometimes hard to catch, he said. Douglas insisted that only those dealers who "knowingly" participate in fraud would face the increased penalties.

The **bills** are moving through the General Assembly with a third measure that would make it more costly for **illegal immigrants** to get behind the wheel in Georgia. SB 15, passed by the full Senate last week, would make driving without a license a felony on the third offense, punishable by one to five years in jail.

## Classification

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**Language:** ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspapers

**Subject:** DRIVERS LICENSES (90%); LEGISLATIVE BODIES (90%); LICENSES & PERMITS (90%); IMMIGRATION (89%); **ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS** (89%); PASSPORTS & VISAS (78%); LEGISLATION (78%); CRIMINAL OFFENSES (78%); VEHICULAR OFFENSES (78%); COUNTERFEITING & FORGERY (73%); MEN (73%); NATIONAL SECURITY (72%); CORRECTIONS (72%); FINES & PENALTIES (72%); FELONIES (72%); JAIL SENTENCING (72%); STUDENTS & STUDENT LIFE (70%)

**Organization:** US DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (58%)

**Industry:** DRIVERS LICENSES (90%); MOTOR VEHICLE DEALERS (75%); NEW CAR DEALERS (72%)

**Geographic:** ATLANTA, GA, USA (78%); GEORGIA, USA (95%)

**Load-Date:** July 24, 2007