



# JERRY PETROWSKI

WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

## DOT Legislative Package: Senate Bills 154 – 157

May 27, 2015

Good morning, members of the committee, and thank you for the opportunity to testify on four bills brought to me by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. These are simple, practical bills that I believe make commonsense changes and update the statutes to reflect modern practices. Representatives from DOT will also be available to answer any questions regarding these bills.

### **Senate Bill 154**

Under current law, drivers facing a flashing yellow traffic signal may enter an intersection with caution without stopping, however the statutes are silent on the topic of flashing yellow arrow signals.

This bill clarifies that when a driver faces a flashing yellow arrow traffic signal, the driver may enter the intersection and make the turn without stopping only after yielding to other traffic lawfully in the intersection. This is a simple change to reflect modern standards in traffic control systems.

### **Senate Bill 155**

Under current law, when pedestrian traffic control signals are in place, pedestrians may cross a roadway when the signal displays the word “Walk” and may not cross the roadway when the signal displays the words “Don’t Walk.”

As many of you know, current technology for these signals allow for a wider array of indicators that are not currently addressed in statute, such as a walking person symbol or an upraised hand signal. This bill updates the statutes and adds clarity to reflect other symbols that are now in use and approved under the Manual of Uniform Control Devices published by the Federal Highway Administration and adopted by the Department of Transportation.

### **Senate Bill 156**

Current state law requires that emergency vehicles must activate both their warning lights and give an audible signal when stopping, standing, or parking in areas where doing so is normally restricted, such as on the shoulder of major highways. In practice, however, this requirement has

29<sup>TH</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

been found to jeopardize the safety of law enforcement personnel, as well as other drivers, especially in situations when a large number of emergency vehicles are present with warning lights activated.

Excessive lighting can be distracting and confusing, and may also direct the focus of other drivers to the lights rather than the roadway. This is particularly true on the scene of major highway accidents, with drivers traveling the opposite direction creating a bottleneck or traffic jam when they slow and turn their attention to the lights.

This bill eliminates this requirement related to stopping, standing, and parking. In general, law enforcement personnel must still activate their warning lights and give an audible signal to remain exempt from restrictions related to speed, obedience to traffic signals, and direction of travel when in pursuit of a violator or responding to an emergency.

### **Senate Bill 157**

Under current law, driver licenses may display a number of different restrictions pertaining to the driver (corrective eyewear, occupational hours of service, graduated driver license, etc.). Under current law, if the text of those restrictions is not able to fit on the front or back of the driver license, the Department of Motor Vehicles is required to print and provide the driver a special restrictions card, which includes the remaining text. This creates difficulty for the driver in having to maintain multiple cards, and results in increased costs and complexities for the printing vendors of driver licenses to produce and deliver these products.

This bill eliminates the requirement for DMV to issue special restriction cards. All of the restriction information for a respective driver is currently available electronically to law enforcement and is accessible to the driver, in addition to other interested parties, through their driver record maintained by DMV. Other uses of the driver license, such as identity or age verification, do not require information on the driver's restrictions. This change would eliminate the need for a driver to retain a set of cards, while at the same time would reduce DMV expenses. An online tool for drivers to verify license information is currently available, where information on a driver's restrictions could be provided at no cost.



## Wisconsin Department of Transportation

[www.dot.wisconsin.gov](http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov)

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**DATE:** May 27, 2015

**TO:** Members, Senate Committee on Transportation and Veterans Affairs  
The Honorable Jerry Petrowski, Chair

**FROM:** Tom Rhatican, Assistant Deputy Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Transportation

**SUBJECT:** Senate Bill 157 (special restrictions cards issued with driver's licenses)

Chairman Petrowski and Committee Members:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify in support of Wisconsin Senate Bill 157 (SB 157). SB 157 relates to special restrictions cards issued with certain motor vehicle operator's licenses.

Under current law, a driver license issued by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (DOT) Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) contains applicable operating restrictions related to the license holder's ability to safely operate a motor vehicle. Driver licenses may display a number of different restrictions pertaining to the driver, including glasses, occupational hours of service, graduated driver license, etc.

Currently, if the text of the restrictions is not able to fit onto the front or back of the driver license, existing law requires DMV to print and provide the driver a special restrictions card, which includes the remaining text. This creates difficulty for the driver from having to maintain multiple cards, and results in increased costs and complexities for the printing vendors of driver licenses to produce and deliver these products. SB 157 eliminates the requirement of DMV to issue special restriction cards, and would result in annual savings for the department in the estimated amount of \$85,000.

All of the restriction information for a respective driver is currently available electronically to law enforcement and is accessible to the driver, in addition to other interested parties, through their driver record, which DMV maintains. Other uses of the driver license, such as identity or age verification, do not require information on the driver's restrictions. This change would eliminate the need for a driver to retain multiple cards, while also reducing DMV expenses. An online tool for drivers to verify license information is currently available online, in which information on a driver's restrictions could be provided at no cost.

If you have any questions, please contact me or Nate Yahn, WisDOT legislative advisor, at (608) 266-1114.