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# PATRICK SNYDER

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 85<sup>th</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

## **Testimony in Support of Assembly Bills 715, 716, and 926**

Assembly Committee on Transportation

February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Chairman Plumer and members of the Committee:

Thank you for taking the time to allow me to testify on a number of bills today.

Assembly Bill 715 was drafted with assistance from the Department of Transportation (DOT) after the Department was approached by U.S. Army Wisconsin Recruiting Command. Army officials informed the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) that recent changes in certain specialized military training programs which require an individual to, at the time of application, possess a valid driver's license which will not expire between the date of application and the anticipated completion of the training program. Military enlistees typically have probationary driver's licenses that expire while in basic training or during specialized training after basic. This bill fixes an issue for military members by allow the DMV to issue "regular" driver's licenses to individuals enlisted in the armed forces. This bill, will allow the Department to assist the approximately, 1,200 to 1,500 annual Armed Forces residents in Wisconsin looking to enter the training programs of their choice.

Assembly Bill 716 was also drafted with assistance from the DOT. The bill eliminates DMV's statutory obligation to issue paper temporary plates and allows DMV to require electronic issuance of temporary plates. Allowing the Department to shift to temporary electronic plates modernizes state statutes to reflect best practices as temporary paper plates are not tied to the owner of a vehicle after the car is sold. The elimination of DMV's obligation to issue paper temporary plates under this bill will allow DMV to complete its transition to requiring electronic issuance of temporary plates. Electronic temporary plates are printed by the dealer or the vehicle owner following issuance. DMV has stopped distributing cardboard plates and this change will align the law with current practices. Electronic temporary plates were implemented for private vehicle sales in 2011 and motor vehicle dealers have been issuing temporary license plates electronically since 2019.

Assembly Bill 926 allows the use signal priority devices on traffic signals for snowplows. Currently, emergency preemption devices are placed on some traffic signals allowing authorized emergency vehicles to transmit a signal to traffic lights to change the normal light sequence and either extend a green light or change a red light to green. This allows emergency vehicles to quickly and safely proceed through intersections without getting stuck at red lights. Signal priority is a similar technology that allows snowplows to request a green light be provided or maintained to allow the vehicle time to travel through the intersection by requesting extra green time to proceed through the intersection to improve

efficiencies during winter maintenance operations and provide safe travel to the motoring public. Current statutes classify signal priority under emergency preemption devices and therefore limit their use to emergency vehicles. However, given that snowplows require different prioritization than emergency vehicles we think that creating a new level of priority for them would help increase traffic flow and snowplowing efficiency. This technology is already in use in Illinois and Utah and a study in Minnesota found increased efficiency associated with signal priority for snowplows.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my testimony today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.



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**To:** Chairman Plumer and members of the Committee  
**From:** Joel Nilsestuen, Assistant Deputy Secretary  
**Date:** February 10, 2022  
**RE: Assembly Bill 926, relating to Vehicle Registration**

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Thank you, Chairman Plumer and committee members for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Assembly Bill 926 on behalf of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

Signal priority is a proven technology that allows equipped vehicles to request or extend a green light at some signalized intersections. Current law allows emergency vehicles to use similar equipment to preempt the traffic signal sequence to provide or extend a green light as they approach an intersection. Preemption is different from priority in that it immediately changes the timing sequence to provide a green light for the direction of the approaching vehicle. The department also uses preemption at signalized intersections near railroad crossings and lift bridges to clear the queue of vehicles that may be in conflict with the train or bridge and then to prevent other vehicles from entering the approach with the tracks or bridge. It is an important safety feature at our signalized intersections.

Signal priority has been shown to improve traffic flow on corridors equipped with this technology. One application is for snowplows that are actively engaged in snow removal or anti-icing to receive additional green time or request a green earlier so they can proceed safely and efficiently through the signalized intersection. In our traffic signal controllers, signal priority receives a lower priority for service than a preemption request. Therefore, a vehicle requesting priority would not receive the green if a vehicle with preemption was approaching from a different direction.

Equipping snowplows and traffic signals with signal priority can lead to more efficient removal of snow, quicker travel times on the snowplow route, and reduced usage of salt. Thank you again for your time and the opportunity to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.