



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 451

January Session, 2023

Substitute House Bill No. 6656

House of Representatives, April 5, 2023

The Committee on Transportation reported through REP. LEMAR of the 96th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE KNOWLEDGE TEST AND ON-THE-ROAD SKILLS TEST FOR AN OPERATOR'S LICENSE AND THE RECIPROCAL RECOGNITION OF DRIVER TRAINING REQUIREMENTS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsections (d) and (e) of section 14-36 of the general
2 statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof
3 (*Effective October 1, 2023*):

4 (d) (1) No motor vehicle operator's license shall be issued to any
5 applicant who is sixteen or seventeen years of age unless the applicant
6 has held a youth instruction permit and has satisfied the requirements
7 specified in this subsection. The applicant shall (A) submit to the
8 commissioner, in such manner as the commissioner shall direct, a
9 certificate of the successful completion (i) in a public secondary school,
10 a technical education and career school or a private secondary school of
11 a full course of study in motor vehicle operation prepared as provided
12 in section 14-36e, (ii) of training of similar nature provided by a licensed

13 drivers' school approved by the commissioner, or (iii) of home training
14 in accordance with subdivision (2) of this subsection, including, in each
15 case, or by a combination of such types of training, successful
16 completion of: Not less than forty clock hours of behind-the-wheel, on-
17 the-road instruction for applicants to whom a youth instruction permit
18 is issued on or after August 1, 2008; (B) submit to the commissioner, in
19 such manner as the commissioner shall direct, a certificate of the
20 successful completion of a course of not less than eight hours relative to
21 safe driving practices, including a minimum of four hours on the nature
22 and the medical, biological and physiological effects of alcohol and
23 drugs and their impact on the operator of a motor vehicle, the dangers
24 associated with the operation of a motor vehicle after the consumption
25 of alcohol or drugs by the operator, the problems of alcohol and drug
26 abuse and the penalties for alcohol and drug-related motor vehicle
27 violations; and (C) pass an examination which may include a
28 comprehensive test as to knowledge of the laws concerning motor
29 vehicles and the rules of the road in addition to the test required under
30 subsection (c) of this section and shall include an on-the-road skills test
31 as prescribed by the commissioner. At the time of application and
32 examination for a motor vehicle operator's license, an applicant sixteen
33 or seventeen years of age shall have held a youth instruction permit for
34 not less than one hundred eighty days, except that an applicant who
35 presents a certificate under subparagraph (A)(i) or subparagraph (A)(ii)
36 of this subdivision shall have held a youth instruction permit for not less
37 than one hundred twenty days and an applicant who is undergoing
38 training and instruction by the driver training unit for persons with
39 disabilities in accordance with the provisions of section 14-11b shall
40 have held such permit for the period of time required by said unit. The
41 commissioner shall approve the content of the safe driving instruction
42 at drivers' schools, high schools and other secondary schools. Subject to
43 such standards and requirements as the commissioner may impose, the
44 commissioner may authorize any drivers' school, licensed in good
45 standing in accordance with the provisions of section 14-69, or
46 secondary school driver education program authorized pursuant to the
47 provisions of section 14-36e, to administer the comprehensive test as to

48 knowledge of the laws concerning motor vehicles and the rules of the
49 road, required pursuant to subparagraph (C) of this subdivision, as part
50 of the safe driving practices course required pursuant to subparagraph
51 (B) of this subdivision, and to certify to the commissioner, under oath,
52 the results of each such test administered. Such hours of instruction
53 required by this subdivision shall be included as part of or in addition
54 to any existing instruction programs. Any fee charged for the course
55 required under subparagraph (B) of this subdivision shall not exceed
56 one hundred fifty dollars. Any applicant sixteen or seventeen years of
57 age who, while a resident of another state, completed the course
58 required in subparagraph (A) of this subdivision, but did not complete
59 the safe driving course required in subparagraph (B) of this subdivision,
60 shall complete the safe driving course. The commissioner may waive
61 any requirement in this subdivision, except for that in subparagraph (C)
62 of this subdivision, in the case of an applicant sixteen or seventeen years
63 of age who holds a valid motor vehicle operator's license issued by any
64 other state, provided the commissioner is satisfied that the applicant has
65 received training and instruction of a similar nature.

66 (2) The commissioner may accept as evidence of sufficient training
67 under subparagraph (A) of subdivision (1) of this subsection home
68 training as evidenced by a written statement submitted to the
69 commissioner, in such manner as the commissioner directs. Such
70 statement shall be signed by the spouse of a married minor applicant, or
71 by a parent, grandparent, foster parent or legal guardian of an applicant,
72 and state that the applicant has obtained a youth instruction permit and
73 has successfully completed a driving course taught by the person
74 signing the statement, that the signer has had an operator's license for
75 at least four years preceding the date of the statement, and that the
76 signer has not had such license suspended by the commissioner for at
77 least four years preceding the date of the statement. If the applicant has
78 no spouse, parent, grandparent, foster parent or guardian so qualified
79 and available to give the instruction, such statement may be signed by
80 the applicant's stepparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt, by blood or
81 marriage, provided the person signing the statement is qualified.

82 (3) [If the commissioner requires a written test of any applicant under
83 this section, the test shall be given in English or Spanish at the option of
84 the applicant] The knowledge test for a class D motor vehicle operator's
85 license required under this section may be administered in such form as
86 the commissioner deems appropriate, including audio, electronic or
87 written testing. Such knowledge test shall be administered, at the option
88 of the applicant, in English, Spanish and at least thirty-four other
89 languages as prescribed by the commissioner, provided the
90 commissioner shall require [that] the applicant [shall] to have sufficient
91 understanding of English for the interpretation of traffic control signs.
92 In determining the other languages for the administration of such
93 knowledge test, the commissioner shall consult with representatives of
94 organizations that advocate on behalf of or assist immigrants, refugees
95 or other persons who are English language learners and shall be
96 responsive to the linguistic needs of the emerging immigrant and
97 refugee populations in the state.

98 (4) The commissioner may adopt regulations, in accordance with the
99 provisions of chapter 54, to implement the purposes of this subsection
100 concerning the requirements for behind-the-wheel, on-the-road
101 instruction, the content of safe driving instruction at drivers' schools,
102 high schools and other secondary schools, and the administration and
103 certification of required testing.

104 (e) (1) No motor vehicle operator's license shall be issued until (A) the
105 applicant signs and submits to the commissioner, in such manner as the
106 commissioner directs, an application under oath, or made subject to
107 penalties for false statement in accordance with section 53a-157b, and
108 (B) the commissioner is satisfied that the applicant is sixteen years of age
109 or older and is a suitable person to receive the license.

110 (2) Except any applicant described in section 14-36m, an applicant for
111 a new motor vehicle operator's license shall submit with the application
112 a copy of such applicant's birth certificate or other prima facie evidence,
113 as determined by the commissioner, of date of birth and evidence of
114 identity.

115 (3) Before granting a license to any applicant who has not previously
116 held a Connecticut motor vehicle operator's license, or whose
117 Connecticut motor vehicle operator's license expired more than two
118 years prior to the application date, the commissioner shall require the
119 applicant to demonstrate personally to the commissioner, a deputy, a
120 motor vehicle inspector or an agent of the commissioner, in such manner
121 as the commissioner directs, that the applicant is a proper person to
122 operate motor vehicles of the class for which such applicant has applied,
123 has sufficient knowledge of the mechanism of the motor vehicles to
124 ensure their safe operation by him or her and has satisfactory
125 knowledge of the laws concerning motor vehicles and the rules of the
126 road. The knowledge test of an applicant for a class D motor vehicle
127 operator's license [may be administered in such form as the
128 commissioner deems appropriate, including audio, electronic or written
129 testing. Such knowledge test shall be administered in English, Spanish
130 or any language spoken at home by at least one per cent of the state's
131 population, according to statistics prepared by the United States Census
132 Bureau, based on the most recent decennial census. Each such
133 knowledge test] shall include a question concerning highway work zone
134 safety and the responsibilities of an operator of a motor vehicle under
135 section 14-212d. Each such knowledge test shall include not less than
136 one question concerning distracted driving, the use of mobile
137 telephones and electronic devices by motor vehicle operators or the
138 responsibilities of motor vehicle operators under section 14-296aa. If any
139 such applicant has held a license from a state, territory or possession of
140 the United States where a similar examination is required, the
141 commissioner may waive part or all of the examination. If any such
142 applicant is (A) a veteran who applies not later than two years after the
143 date of discharge from the military and who, prior to such discharge,
144 held a military operator's license for motor vehicles of the same class as
145 that for which such applicant has applied, or (B) a member of the armed
146 forces or the National Guard who currently holds a military operator's
147 license for motor vehicles of the same class as that for which such
148 applicant has applied, the commissioner shall waive all of the
149 examination, except in the case of a commercial motor vehicle license,

150 the commissioner shall waive the driving skills test for such applicant
151 and may, in such commissioner's discretion, waive the knowledge test
152 for such application, provided such applicant meets the conditions set
153 forth in 49 CFR 383.77, as amended from time to time. For the purposes
154 of this subsection, "veteran" and "armed forces" have the same meanings
155 as provided in section 27-103. When the commissioner is satisfied as to
156 the ability and competency of any applicant, the commissioner may
157 issue to such applicant a license, either unlimited or containing such
158 limitations as the commissioner deems advisable, and specifying the
159 class of motor vehicles which the licensee is eligible to operate.

160 (4) If any applicant or operator license holder has any health problem
161 which might affect such person's ability to operate a motor vehicle
162 safely, the commissioner may require the applicant or license holder to
163 demonstrate personally or otherwise establish that, notwithstanding
164 such problem, such applicant or license holder is a proper person to
165 operate a motor vehicle, and the commissioner may further require a
166 certificate of such applicant's condition, signed by a medical authority
167 designated by the commissioner, which certificate shall in all cases be
168 treated as confidential by the commissioner. A license, containing such
169 limitation as the commissioner deems advisable, may be issued or
170 renewed in any case, but nothing in this section shall be construed to
171 prevent the commissioner from refusing a license, either limited or
172 unlimited, to any person or suspending a license of a person whom the
173 commissioner determines to be incapable of safely operating a motor
174 vehicle. Consistent with budgetary allotments, each motor vehicle
175 operator's license issued to or renewed by a person who is deaf or hard
176 of hearing shall, upon the request of such person, indicate such
177 impairment. Such person shall submit a certificate stating such
178 impairment, in such form as the commissioner may require and signed
179 by a licensed health care practitioner.

180 (5) The issuance of a motor vehicle operator's license to any applicant
181 who is the holder of a license issued by another state shall be subject to
182 the provisions of [sections 14-111c and] section 14-111k.

183 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Not later than October 1, 2023,
 184 the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall offer appointments for the
 185 on-the-road skills test portion of the examination for a motor vehicle
 186 operator's license at drivers' schools, licensed in accordance with the
 187 provisions of section 14-69 of the general statutes. The on-the-road skills
 188 test shall be administered by a motor vehicle inspector agent or an agent
 189 of the commissioner and shall be made available to all students of such
 190 schools who are otherwise eligible to take such test.

191 Sec. 3. (*Effective from passage*) On or before February 1, 2024, the
 192 Commissioner of Motor Vehicles shall submit a report, in accordance
 193 with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint
 194 standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of
 195 matters relating to transportation, regarding the status of entering into
 196 an agreement with Taiwan for the reciprocal recognition of driver
 197 training requirements.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2023</i>	14-36(d) and (e)
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	New section

TRA *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill requires the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to offer the driver's license knowledge test in English, Spanish, and at least 34 other languages. DMV currently offers the test in English, Spanish and 10 other languages, so the requirements in the bill represent an additional 24 languages beyond existing practice. This does not result in a fiscal impact because DMV is developing the test in new languages and anticipates meeting the requirements of this bill by the end of the current fiscal year (FY 23).

The remaining sections of the bill are not expected to result in a fiscal impact because DMV has existing expertise and operations in these areas.

The Out Years

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 6656*****AN ACT CONCERNING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE KNOWLEDGE TEST AND ON-THE-ROAD SKILLS TEST FOR AN OPERATOR'S LICENSE AND THE RECIPROCAL RECOGNITION OF DRIVER TRAINING REQUIREMENTS.*****SUMMARY**

This bill makes three unrelated changes in the laws governing driver licensing and testing.

It requires the driver's license knowledge test to be provided, at the option of the applicant, in English, Spanish, and at least 34 other languages as prescribed by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) commissioner. Under current law, the test must be offered in English, Spanish, or any language spoken at home by at least 1% of the state's population, based on the most recent U.S. decennial census.

In determining the other languages for the knowledge test, the commissioner must (1) consult with representatives of organizations that advocate on behalf of or assist immigrants, refugees, or other English language learners and (2) be responsive to the linguistic needs of the state's emerging immigrant and refugee populations. By law, unchanged by the bill, the commissioner must require a driver's license applicant to have sufficient understanding of English to interpret traffic control signs.

In addition, the bill requires the DMV commissioner to do the following:

1. by October 1, 2023, offer appointments for the on-the-road skills test, to be administered by one of his agents or a motor vehicle inspector agent, at licensed driving schools for all students who

are otherwise eligible to take the test (under current practice, these tests are offered to drivers up to age 21) and

2. by February 1, 2024, submit a status report to the Transportation Committee about a reciprocal agreement with Taiwan for recognizing driver training requirements.

Lastly, the bill makes technical changes, including removing references to a repealed statute.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except the provision related to translated knowledge tests is effective October 1, 2023.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Transportation Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 34 Nay 2 (03/17/2023)