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SENATE BILL

56TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2023

INTRODUCED BY

Peter Wirth and Christine Chandler and Crystal R. Diamond

AN ACT

RELATING TO DRIVER'S LICENSES; CHANGING THE PENALTIES FOR THE
SUSPENSION OF A DRIVER'S LICENSE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. Section 66-5-26 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1978,
Chapter 35, Section 248, as amended) is amended to read:

"66-5-26. SUSPENDING RESIDENT'S LICENSE [~~CONVICTION
FAILURE TO APPEAR--FAILURE TO PAY IN ANOTHER STATE OR TRIBAL
JURISDICTION]~~--AUTOMATIC REINSTATEMENT WITHOUT FEE.--

A. The division is authorized to suspend or revoke
the license of a resident of this state or the privilege of a
nonresident to drive a motor vehicle in this state upon
receiving notice of the conviction of such person in another
state or by a tribe of an offense that if committed within the
jurisdiction of this state, would be grounds for the suspension

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1 or revocation of the license of a driver.

2 ~~[B. In addition, the division is authorized to~~
3 ~~suspend the license of a resident of this state, or the~~
4 ~~privilege of a nonresident to drive a motor vehicle in this~~
5 ~~state, upon receiving notice of failure to appear or pay a~~
6 ~~penalty assessment imposed by a tribe or imposed in another~~
7 ~~state that is a signatory of the Nonresident Violator Compact~~
8 ~~with New Mexico.]~~

9 B. A person whose driver's license was suspended
10 solely for nonpayment or failure to appear and who is otherwise
11 eligible to drive may have the person's driver's license
12 reinstated and shall not be required to pay a reinstatement
13 fee. No later than September 1, 2023, the division shall,
14 without requiring a reinstatement fee, reinstate the driver's
15 license or nonresident operating privilege of every person
16 whose license or nonresident operating privilege is suspended
17 solely for nonpayment or failure to appear and who is otherwise
18 eligible to drive."

19 SECTION 2. Section 66-5-30 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1978,
20 Chapter 35, Section 252, as amended) is amended to read:

21 "66-5-30. AUTHORITY OF DIVISION TO SUSPEND OR REVOKE
22 LICENSE.--

23 A. The division may suspend the instruction permit,
24 driver's license or provisional license of a driver without
25 preliminary hearing upon a showing by its records or other

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1 sufficient evidence, including information provided to the
2 state pursuant to an intergovernmental agreement authorized by
3 Section 66-5-27.1 NMSA 1978, that the licensee:

4 (1) has been convicted of an offense for which
5 mandatory revocation of license is required upon conviction;

6 (2) has been convicted as a driver in an
7 accident resulting in the death or personal injury of another
8 or serious property damage;

9 (3) has been convicted with such frequency of
10 offenses against traffic laws or rules governing motor vehicles
11 as to indicate a disrespect for traffic laws and a disregard
12 for the safety of other persons on the highways;

13 (4) is an habitually reckless or negligent
14 driver of a motor vehicle;

15 (5) is incompetent to drive a motor vehicle;

16 (6) has permitted an unlawful or fraudulent
17 use of the license;

18 (7) has been convicted of an offense in
19 another state or tribal jurisdiction that if committed within
20 this state's jurisdiction would be grounds for suspension or
21 revocation of the license;

22 (8) has violated provisions stipulated by a
23 district court in limitation of certain driving privileges; or

24 (9) has accumulated at least seven points, but
25 less than eleven points, and when the division has received a

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1 recommendation from a municipal or magistrate judge that the
2 license be suspended for a period not to exceed three months.

3 B. The division may issue an administrative
4 suspension of the instruction permit, driver's license or
5 provisional license of a driver without preliminary hearing
6 upon a showing by its records or other sufficient evidence,
7 including information provided to the state pursuant to an
8 intergovernmental agreement authorized by Section 66-5-27.1
9 NMSA 1978, that the licensee has failed to

10 ~~[(1) fulfill a signed promise to appear or~~
11 ~~notice to appear in court as evidenced by notice from a state~~
12 ~~court or tribal court, whenever appearance is required by law~~
13 ~~or by the court as a consequence of a charge or conviction~~
14 ~~under the Motor Vehicle Code or pursuant to the laws of the~~
15 ~~tribe;~~

16 ~~(2) pay a penalty assessment within thirty~~
17 ~~days of the date of issuance by the state or a tribe; or~~

18 ~~(3)]~~ comply with the terms of a citation issued
19 in a foreign jurisdiction that is a party to the Nonresident
20 Violator Compact and that has notified the department of the
21 failure in accordance with the Nonresident Violator Compact.

22 C. If a person whose license was issued by a
23 jurisdiction outside New Mexico that is a party to the
24 Nonresident Violator Compact fails to comply with the terms of
25 a citation issued in New Mexico, the department shall notify

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1 that other jurisdiction of the failure and that jurisdiction
2 [~~shall~~] may initiate a license suspension action in accordance
3 with the provisions of Article IV of the Nonresident Violator
4 Compact.

5 D. Upon suspending the license of a person as
6 authorized in this section, the division shall immediately
7 notify the licensee in writing of the licensee's right to a
8 hearing before the administrative hearings office and, upon the
9 licensee's request, shall notify the administrative hearings
10 office. The administrative hearings office shall schedule the
11 hearing to take place as early as practicable, but [~~within no~~
12 ~~more~~] not later than twenty days, not counting Saturdays,
13 Sundays and legal holidays, after receipt of the request. The
14 hearing shall be held in the county in which the licensee
15 resides unless the hearing officer and the licensee agree that
16 the hearing may be held in some other county; provided that the
17 hearing request is received within twenty days from the date
18 that the suspension was deposited in the United States mail.
19 The hearing officer may, in the hearing officer's discretion,
20 extend the twenty-day period. The hearing shall be held as
21 provided in the Administrative Hearings Office Act. After the
22 hearing, the hearing officer shall either rescind the order of
23 suspension or continue, modify or extend the suspension of the
24 license or revoke the license."

25 SECTION 3. Section 66-5-32 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1978,

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1 Chapter 35, Section 254, as amended) is amended to read:

2 "66-5-32. PERIOD OF SUSPENSION OR REVOCATION.--

3 A. The division shall not suspend a driver's
4 license or privilege to drive a motor vehicle on the public
5 highways for a period of more than one year except as permitted
6 under [~~Subsection C of this section and~~] Sections 60-7B-1,
7 66-5-5, 66-5-39 and 66-5-39.1 NMSA 1978.

8 B. Except as provided in the Ignition Interlock
9 Licensing Act, a person whose license or privilege to drive a
10 motor vehicle on the public highways has been revoked shall not
11 be entitled to have the license or privilege renewed or
12 restored unless the revocation was for a cause that has been
13 removed, except that after the expiration of the periods
14 specified in Subsections B and C of Section 66-5-29 NMSA 1978
15 from the date on which the revoked license was surrendered to
16 and received by the division, the person may make application
17 for a new license as provided by law.

18 [~~C. The suspension period for failure to appear or
19 failure to remit the penalty assessment shall, at the
20 discretion of the director, be extended indefinitely subject to
21 the provisions of Subsection B of Section 66-5-30 NMSA 1978.]"~~