



SB 1233 (Gonzalez) Eliminating Barriers to DMV Services

SUMMARY

SB 1233 requires the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to coordinate with relevant stakeholders to develop outreach strategies for Californians that have historically been underserved by the DMV. The bill also requires the DMV to solicit requests for targeted outreach events from local community groups that represent underserved populations.

EXISTING LAW

Current law seeks to reduce barriers to DMV services for underserved populations. Under the Dymally–Alatorre Bilingual Services Act, signed in 1973, the DMV, along with other state agencies, must provide language services to any group which comprises five percent or more of the people served by any local office or agency.

Furthermore, AB 60 (Alejo, Chapters of 254, Statutes of 2013) authorizes the DMV to issue IDs and Driver's Licenses to applicants who cannot provide proof of legal presence in the U.S., but who can prove identity and residency in California. Also, AB 1733 (Quirk Silva, Chapters of 764, Statutes of 2014) requires the DMV to make IDs free of charge to individuals experiencing homelessness.

BACKGROUND/PROBLEM

Having a valid ID is critical to some the most essential aspects of life, such as leasing an apartment, enrolling children in school, applying for jobs, or receiving medical care¹. Identification can also be especially important for vulnerable populations, since an official government ID is often the default method of verification needed to apply for Medi-Cal, food stamps, and cash assistance programs.²

¹ <https://www.homelessidproject.org/>

² (<https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2017/05/15/without-id-homeless-trapped-in-vicious-cycle>)

However, many Californians face barriers in receiving DMV services. Language access is still a barrier for many Californians as only a tiny fraction of languages meet the 5% threshold which requires multi-lingual language service under the Dymally–Alatorre Bilingual Services Act.

According to the 2020 California Census Language and Communication Access Plan, there are over a hundred languages that, when considered by county, do not meet the 5% threshold for language service, but that have more than 100 language speakers³. There are at least 220 languages spoken in California, and 44% of California residents speak a language other than English at home. As a result, existing law and DMV services do not meet the language diversity needs of many Californians.

Likewise, DMV ID processes were not designed with California's homeless population in mind. Many people experiencing homelessness are migratory and do not have addresses for receiving IDs or verifying residency. In recognition of the difficulties facing people experiencing homelessness, DMV field offices are already conducting targeted outreach events with local non-profits in Los Angeles. This process, however, is not currently formalized in a way that could be replicated and expanded to benefit other communities and groups of Californians struggling to access DMV services.

SOLUTION

SB 1233 will address gaps in current access to DMV services by requiring the DMV to work with stakeholders to identify underserved groups, and create a formalized protocol for facilitating outreach events with local entities representing these groups.

³

https://census.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2019/06/LACA_P.pdf

SB XXX builds of ongoing outreach efforts at the DMV, but requires systemization of this process to add transparency to local community groups and to enable these processes to be made available to other underserved groups.

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