

HB 815 -- Motor Vehicle Violation Penalties

Sponsor: Meadows

This bill changes the laws regarding the penalties for certain violations of motor vehicle licensing, registration, and equipment provisions. In its main provisions, the bill:

(1) Changes the penalties for persons violating the provisions of Sections 301.010 - 301.440, RSMo, regarding registration and licensing of motor vehicles. Currently, persons violating a provision of these sections can be found guilty of a class C misdemeanor and be subject to a fine of not less than \$5 or more than \$500 and/or imprisonment in the county jail for a term not exceeding one year. The bill reduces the penalty to an infraction with the same fines;

(2) Specifies that any person who willfully or knowingly makes a false statement on an application for the registration of a motor vehicle or trailer, or as a dealer, or in an application for or assignment of a certificate of ownership will be guilty of a class C misdemeanor;

(3) Changes a violation of the following from a misdemeanor to an infraction:

(a) Provisions of Sections 301.700 - 301.714 and Section 307.198 regarding all-terrain vehicles;

(b) Provisions regarding when materials fall off a vehicle, trailer, or semitrailer while being transported or carried;

(c) Provisions requiring vehicles to be equipped with mud flaps;

(d) Provisions of Sections 307.020 - 307.120 regarding vehicle light regulations;

(e) Provisions regarding the lighting requirements for animal-driven vehicles;

(f) Provisions of Sections 307.130 - 307.160 regarding vehicle safety glass;

(g) Provisions regarding vehicle maximum bumper heights;

(h) Provisions regarding vehicle side window tinting;

(i) Provisions regarding the improper operation of a motorized bicycle;

(j) Provisions of Sections 307.350 - 307.390 regarding motor vehicle inspections; and

(k) Provisions of Section 307.400 regarding regulations of commercial vehicles, equipment, and operation;

(4) Changes a violation of the following from an infraction to a class C misdemeanor:

(a) Provisions of Section 307.365 regarding requirements of official inspection stations; and

(b) Provisions of Section 307.375 regarding inspections of buses used to transport children to or from school;

(5) Requires Missouri courts for any infraction, unless otherwise provided by law, to assess all court costs, fees, surcharges, and other miscellaneous charges in the same manner and amount as a misdemeanor;

(6) Specifies that an offense is an infraction if it is designated as one or if a violation can result only in a fine, forfeiture, other civil penalty, or any combination thereof. A determination of whether an infraction has occurred will be made by the filing of a civil action. The action must be filed by a person who is authorized to bring a criminal action or an action to enforce an ordinance. The action will be brought in the name of the state or the appropriate political subdivision. An infraction violation must be proved by a preponderance of the evidence but must not be tried by a jury. If an infraction violation is proven, judgment must be entered for the plaintiff; and

(7) Requires the driver of any vehicle or the rider of any animal traveling on a roadway to stop on the signal of any law enforcement officer and to obey any reasonable signals or directions of the officer given in the course of enforcing any infraction. Any person who willfully fails or refuses to obey any signal or direction or who resists or opposes an officer while enforcing any infraction will be guilty of a class A misdemeanor.