

# SENATE, No. 665

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2022 SESSION

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator STEVEN V. OROHO**

**District 24 (Morris, Sussex and Warren)**

**Senator LINDA R. GREENSTEIN**

**District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Senators Pou, O'Scanlon and Diegnan**

**SYNOPSIS**

Requires MVC to place notation on vehicle's registration certificate indicating registrant is deaf.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



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1 AN ACT concerning notations on vehicle registration certificates  
2 indicating the registrant is deaf and supplementing chapter 3 of  
3 Title 39 of the New Jersey Statutes.

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5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
6 of New Jersey:

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8 1. Upon application by any person with a hearing loss of a pure  
9 tone average of 41 dB or greater, verified by an  
10 otorhinolaryngologist (ENT) or an audiologist clinically certified by  
11 the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, the Chief  
12 Administrator of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission shall  
13 issue to the applicant a special registration certificate bearing the  
14 international symbol for deafness or a numerical code designating  
15 deafness, whichever shall be specified by the applicant. The  
16 deafness designation shall only be placed on the special registration  
17 certificate and renewal of such designation shall be done during  
18 renewal of a motor vehicle registration. The design of the special  
19 registration certificate shall be approved by the Chief Administrator  
20 of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission. No fee over and  
21 above the required fee for a registration certificate shall be imposed  
22 for the special registration certificate.

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24 2. This act shall take effect on the 180th day after enactment  
25 and shall apply to motor vehicle registration certificates issued or  
26 renewed on or after this date.

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STATEMENT

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31 This bill would require the Chief Administrator of the New  
32 Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission to place a notation on a vehicle's  
33 registration certificate indicating the registrant is deaf. This  
34 notation would be placed on the certificate provided the applicant  
35 has a hearing loss of 41 decibels or greater. As part of the  
36 application process, an otorhinolaryngologist (ENT) or an  
37 audiologist clinically certified by the American Speech-Language-  
38 Hearing Association is required to verify the applicant's hearing  
39 ability. Upon approval, the Chief Administrator is required to issue  
40 the applicant a special registration certificate with the international  
41 symbol for deafness or a numerical code designating deafness,  
42 whichever the applicant prefers. No additional fees will be assessed  
43 for applicants who seek a special registration certificate.

44 For individuals who are deaf, communicating with law  
45 enforcement can be a challenge. An officer may not understand  
46 what the individual is trying to say or misinterpret any movements  
47 or gestures as a sign of aggression and respond with force.

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1 Incidents of this nature highlight the extent to which officer training  
2 fails to prepare graduates for interactions with the deaf community.

3 Many members of law enforcement receive limited training and  
4 resources to help them communicate with the deaf community.  
5 Some departments dedicate more time instructing trainees on urgent  
6 matters such as use of force, firearms, driving, and first aid. Other  
7 departments find they lack the financial resources to ensure officers  
8 can access interpreters and translation equipment.

9 Here in New Jersey, local law enforcement is attempting to break  
10 down communication barriers by participating in panel discussions  
11 with members of the deaf community. These discussions allow  
12 individuals who are deaf to ask questions in a non-adversarial  
13 setting and provide suggestions for what officers can do during  
14 traffic stops to ensure a deaf driver can better understand an  
15 officer's instructions. Under New Jersey law, those who are deaf or  
16 hard of hearing may apply to receive a deaf or hard of hearing  
17 designation on their driver's license. The sponsor believes that  
18 placing a notation on a vehicle's registration certificate is one step  
19 towards improving how members of law enforcement communicate  
20 with motorists during routine traffic stops and prevent future  
21 tragedies that may occur as the result of a misunderstanding.