

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2017

H

5

HOUSE BILL 84  
Committee Substitute Favorable 3/21/17  
Committee Substitute #2 Favorable 4/5/17  
Senate Rules and Operations of the Senate Committee Substitute Adopted 6/14/17  
Fifth Edition Engrossed 6/22/17

Short Title: DL/Deaf or Hard of Hearing Designation.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

February 13, 2017

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO DIRECT THE DIVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLES TO DEVELOP A  
3 DESIGNATION FOR DRIVERS LICENSES THAT MAY BE GRANTED UPON  
4 REQUEST TO A PERSON WHO IS DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING.

5 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

6 **SECTION 1.** G.S. 20-7 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

7 "(q2) Deaf or Hard of Hearing Designation. – The Division shall develop, in consultation  
8 with the Department of Public Safety, the State Highway Patrol, the Division of Services for  
9 the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and pursuant to this subsection, a drivers license designation that  
10 may, upon request, be granted to a person who is deaf or hard of hearing. The Division shall  
11 comply with the following requirements applicable to the designation:

12 (1) At the request of a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, the Division shall  
13 place a unique symbol on the front of the person's license. The unique  
14 symbol placed on the license shall not include any further descriptor. The  
15 Division shall record the designation in the electronic record associated with  
16 the person's drivers license.

17 (2) At the request of a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, the Division shall  
18 enter the drivers license symbol and a descriptor into the electronic record of  
19 any motor vehicle registered in the same name of the deaf or hard of hearing  
20 person.

21 (3) For the purposes of this subsection, a person shall be considered to be deaf  
22 or hard of hearing if they provide verification or documentation  
23 substantiating their hearing loss that is recommended by the Division of  
24 Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing as acceptable. The Division of  
25 Motor Vehicles shall consult with the Division of Services for the Deaf and  
26 the Hard of Hearing to identify acceptable forms of verification that do not  
27 result in undue burden to the person requesting the designation of hearing  
28 loss. Acceptable documentation shall include any of the following:

29 a. Documentation of certification or examination by a medical, health,  
30 or audiology professional showing evidence of hearing loss.

31 b. Affidavit executed by the person, their parent, or guardian attesting  
32 to the person's hearing loss.



1           c.       Documentation deemed by the Division of Motor Vehicles to qualify  
2                   as satisfactory proof of the person's hearing loss.

3       (4)   Nothing in this subsection shall be construed as authorizing the issuance of a  
4       drivers license to a person ineligible under G.S. 20-9.

5       (5)   Nothing in this subsection shall be construed as prohibiting the issuance of a  
6       drivers license to a person otherwise eligible under the law.

7       (6)   Any individual who chooses to register or not to register shall not be deemed  
8       to have waived any protections under the law.

9       (7)   Information collected under this subsection shall only be available to law  
10       enforcement and only for the purpose of ensuring mutually safe interactions  
11       between law enforcement and persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. It  
12       shall not be accessed or used for any other purpose.

13       (8)   The right to make the decision for inclusion or removal of the designation  
14       from the database is entirely voluntary and shall only be made by the person  
15       who holds the drivers license associated with the designation.

16       (9)   The Division, in conjunction with the Department of Health and Human  
17       Services, shall develop a process for removal of the designation authorized  
18       by this subsection that is available online, by mail, or in person."

19       **SECTION 2.** G.S. 17C-6(a) is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

20       "(17) Establish minimum educational and training standards for employment and  
21       continuing education for criminal justice officers concerning:

22           a.       Recognizing and appropriately interacting with persons who are deaf  
23                   or hard of hearing.

24           b.       Drivers license and vehicle registration identifiers of persons who are  
25                   deaf or hard of hearing, as authorized by G.S. 20-7(q2), including  
26                   that those identifiers are optional."

27       **SECTION 3.** G.S. 17E-4(a) is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

28       "(13) Establish minimum educational and training standards for employment and  
29       continuing education for officers concerning:

30           a.       Recognizing and appropriately interacting with persons who are deaf  
31                   or hard of hearing.

32           b.       Drivers license and vehicle registration identifiers of persons who are  
33                   deaf or hard of hearing, as authorized by G.S. 20-7(q2), including  
34                   that those identifiers are optional."

35       **SECTION 4.** This act becomes effective January 1, 2018.