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only; Neither for nor against: Speaking for information

Please return this slip to a messenger PROMPTLY. Senate Sergeant-At-Arms State Capitol - B35 South P.O.Box 7882

Madison, WI 53707-7882

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State Capitol - B35 South
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Madison, WI 53707-7882

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State Capitol - B35 South

P.O.Box 7882 Madison, WI 53707-7882



**Government Operations** 

TO:

FROM:	Senator Bob Wirch, Chair
DATE:	March 8, 2000
RE:	Paper Ballot – Senate Bill 360
Please find amendment	enclosed a copy of a memo from Legislative Council regarding the substitute for Senate Bill 360, which had a hearing on February 9 <sup>th</sup> .
PLEASE RI	ETURN YOUR BALLOTS BY 5:00 P.M. TODAY.
Motion by S	enator Wirch, for introduction and adoption of LRB s0319.
Aye	No
Motion by S	enator Wirch, for passage of Senate Bill 360 as amended.
Aye	No
Signature:	



TO:	Members, Committee on Economic Development, Housing and Government Operations
FROM:	Senator Bob Wirch, Chair
DATE:	March 8, 2000
RE:	Paper Ballot – Senate Bill 360
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Aye	No
Signature: _	Mahrhandt



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	Senator Wirch, for introduction and adoption of LRB s0319.
Aye	No
Motion by	Senator Wirch, for passage of Senate Bill 360 as amended.
Aye	No
Signature: _	Dany 7. Dagwieshi
Date:	3.8.2000



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Signature:	Foundalynne Ma 23
Date: $\sum$	nurch 8, 2000



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Aye	No
Motion by S	Senator Wirch, for passage of Senate Bill 360 as amended.
Aye	No



## WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL STAFF MEMORANDUM

One East Main Street, Suite 401; P.O. Box 2536; Madison, WI 53701–2536
Telephone: (608) 266–1304
Fax: (608) 266–3830
Email: leg.council@legis.state.wi.us

DATE:

March 6, 2000

TO:

SENATOR ROBERT WIRCH

FROM:

Dan Fernbach, Senior Staff Attorney

SUBJECT:

Senate Substitute Amendment \_\_ (LRBs0319/1) to 1999 Senate Bill 360,

Relating to Nonmoving Traffic Violations Involving Rented or Leased Motor

**Vehicles** 

1999 Senate Bill 360 was introduced by you, and cosponsored by Representative Duff, on February 2, 2000. The bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and Government Operations, which conducted a public hearing on the bill on February 9, 2000.

### A. PRESENT LAW

Under present s. 345.28 (4) (a), Stats., a local authority that issues parking tickets may notify the Department of Transportation (DOT) if a person fails to pay a parking ticket or fails to appear in court in response to the citation. In such cases, the authority may require the DOT to suspend the registration of the offending vehicle or refuse to register any vehicle owned by the offender, or both, which shall continue until the offender appears in court or pays the full amount of the parking ticket, plus any related costs.

A business that rents or leases motor vehicles, such as a car rental company (hereafter, "the lessor"), is generally responsible for the payment of any parking tickets issued to its vehicles. However, under s. 345.28 (5m) (a), Stats., the local authority may not notify the DOT to suspend or refuse registration if:

- 1. The vehicle receiving the parking ticket is owned by a lessor and was rented or leased to another when the parking ticket was issued;
  - 2. The lessor timely identifies the renter or lessee to the local authority; and
- 3. After receiving notice from the local authority, the renter or lessee timely pays the parking ticket or appears in court in response thereto.

Pursuant to s. 345.28 (5m) (b) and (c), Stats., if the renter or lessee fails to pay the parking ticket or appear in court, the lessor must pay 50% of the forfeiture and costs applicable to the parking ticket. Subsequently, if the ticket is paid in full by the renter or lessee, the lessor's 50% payment is refunded. If the lessor fails to pay 50% of the forfeiture and related costs, the local authority may require the DOT to suspend the registration of the vehicle involved with the parking ticket.

### **B. PROVISIONS OF SENATE BILL 360**

As under current law, the *lessor is generally liable* for payment of a parking ticket unless the lessor identifies the offending renter or lessee. The bill continues to require a local authority to reimburse a lessor who pays any part (rather than the current 50%) of the forfeiture or costs of a parking ticket that is later paid in full by the offending renter or lessee. However, if the lessor identifies the renter or lessee to the local authority, the bill relieves the lessor from *liability* for a parking ticket and eliminates the requirement that the lessor pay any portion of the ticket or related costs.

Finally, the bill amends s. 345.285, Stats., relating to the DOT's Alternative Traffic Violation and Registration Pilot Program, to prohibit the *City of Milwaukee* from suspending a rented or leased vehicle's registration or taking other action under certain circumstances. Currently, under the program the DOT may permit the city to suspend the registration of any vehicle for unpaid parking tickets. The bill would exempt rented or leased vehicles from such action under the program if the vehicle was being rented or leased when the parking violation occurred and the lessor timely identifies the renter or lessee to the city.

The bill, if enacted, would take effect on the first day of the fourth month beginning after publication and applies to parking tickets issued on or after that date.

### C. PROVISIONS OF SENATE SUBSTITUTE AMENDMENT (LRBs0319/1)

Proposed Senate Substitute Amendment \_\_ (LRBs0319/1) to Senate Bill 360, amends present s. 345.28 (4) and (5m), Stats., as follows:

- 1. The substitute amendment *limits the liability* of a lessor who timely notifies a local authority of the identity of the offending lessee of a vehicle issued a parking ticket to *not more* than 50% of the amount of the original parking ticket [Sections 1, 2, 7 and 8 of the draft]; and
- 2. The substitute amendment *limits the time* during which a local authority may attempt to collect a parking forfeiture from a lessor who provides timely notice of the offending lessee's identity to *one year* from the date the parking citation was issued [Sections 3 and 6 of the draft].

The substitute amendment, if enacted, would take effect on the first day of the fourth month beginning after publication and applies to parking tickets issued on or after that date.

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# Wisconsin Car Rental Alliance

# Testimony on SB 360

### **OFFICERS**

President
William J. Wallschlaeger
Avis
Appleton

Senate Economic Development, Housing & Government Operations Committee
February 9, 2000

Vice President Daniel T. Ewald Mayfair Milwaukee

Secretary John G. Nottoli, Jr. Hertz Madison

Treasurer Nancy J. Umland Avis Appleton

### **DIRECTORS**

Herb Cuene Hertz Green Bay

Larry Lanham Budget Madison

James R. Loomer Enterprise Milwaukee

Terry McCaughey Campus Car Rental Madison

Sherry Rogers Avis Appleton

Bruce Werschem National Kaukauna Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I'm Bill Wallschlaeger of Midwestern Wheels, an Avis franchise based in Appleton, appearing in support of Senate Bill 360. I am also the current president of the Wisconsin Car Rental Alliance, our state trade association.

First, I'd like to give you a little background on why this bill is needed:

- Under a provision going back to the early 1980's, current law in Wisconsin allows the Department of Transportation to suspend the registration of a vehicle when there are unpaid nonmoving traffic citations.
- This law was intended to give municipalities additional leverage in collecting unpaid parking fines from vehicle owners who would habitually ignore citations. These persons knew they could accumulate many unpaid tickets before a warrant was ever issued for them in some jurisdictions.
- There is one feature of this law that we believe is fundamentally unfair. If a parking ticket is issued to someone driving a rental car, the car rental agency would be unaware of this. The ticket is placed on the rental vehicle and the renter either pays the ticket (in most cases) or occasionally, if the renter is from out-of-state, discards it.
- The car rental agency first becomes aware of a parking violation only
  if the ticket has gone unpaid. The rental company then receives notice
  from the local police department that there is an outstanding citation.
  The rental agency is required to provide the local authority with the
  renter's name, address, and driver's license information from its
  records.

660 East Mason Street Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202 (414) 271-5900

- What happens next is where we believe the procedure should in fairness be changed. Currently, if the renter does not respond to another notice within 30 days of it being mailed, the car rental agency becomes responsible for payment of 50% of the now escalated ticket or its vehicle registration can be suspended. The bill before you would vehicle registration can be required information has not been supplied.
  - This change is consistent with the way other states handle this problem. (I have copies of the laws in Minnesota and Ohio for the Committee's information.) I don't know of any other circumstances under which a third party (the car rental firm) is held financially responsible for a situation over which they have no control, especially when they have cooperated and provided the required information. It just isn't fair to be put in the position of a payer of last resort, particularly when the amount due is a multiple of the original fine.

With me today is Bruce Werschem of National Car Rental, who will go into some of his personal experiences with this law.

MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION, TAXATION, SALE

168.27

s 9; 1982 c 424 s 130; 1984 c 549 s 19,20; 1984 c 654 art 3 s 59,60; 1985 c 63 s 6,7; 1985 c 186 s 1-4; 1985 c 291 s 14; 1986 c 444; 1986 c 454 s 14-16; 1Sp1986 c 3 art 1 s 24; 1987 c 383 s 3; 1988 c 496 s 1-10; 1988 c 634 s 1-8; 1989 c 323 s 2-4; 1989 c 342 s 12; 1990 c 497 s 7; 1991 c 333 s 8,9; 1992 c 367 s 1; 1993 c 259 s 1; 1994 c 465 art 3 s 14; 1994 c 500 s 1; 1994 c 536 s 11-16; 1994 c 587 art 2 s 21; 1995 c 128 art 1 s 4

### 168.2701 LIABILITY OF LESSORS FOR UNPAID TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS.

When a motor vehicle lessor, licensed under section 168.27, subdivision 2, 3, or 4, is issued a traffic violation citation for a violation committed by a lessee while operating the leased or rented vehicle, the lessor shall convey to the issuing authority within 15 days of the lessor receiving knowledge of the traffic violation, information to the extent available, including the driver's full name, home address, local address, if any, license number, employer's name and address, post office box, and form of payment. Upon compliance with this section, the lessor is not liable for the amount of fine, penalty assessment, late payment penalty, or cost of warrants issued in connection with the violation. However, action on the part of the issuing authority relieving the lessor of liability does not absolve the person incurring the violation of responsibility for the infraction.

History: 1986 c 332 s 1

### 168.2702 MOTOR VEHICLE LEASES: INDEMNITY AGREEMENTS.

Notwithstanding other law to the contrary, a provision in a motor vehicle lease agreement that indemnifies the lessor against any claims or liabilities arising out of the use, operation, or maintenance of the vehicle by the lessee includes the right to indemnity for traffic violations, penalties, and punitive damages caused by the lessee and is enforceable in accordance with its terms. This section does not relieve the lessor of any liability, penalty, or damages arising out of its own acts or omissions.

History: 1991 c 280 s 1

### 168.271 INFORMATIONAL LABELS ON PICKUP TRUCKS; PENALTY.

Subdivision 1. Every manufacturer of new trucks having a gross vehicle weight of 9,000 pounds or less which are sold or offered for sale for use upon the public streets or highways within this state shall, prior to the delivery of the new truck to a Minnesota dealer, or at or prior to the introduction date of new models delivered to a Minnesota dealer prior to introduction date, securely affix to the windshield or side window of the truck a label upon which the manufacturer shall endorse clearly, distinctly and legibly true and correct entries disclosing information identical to and in the same manner as required on new automobiles. The label shall remain affixed to the truck until delivery of the truck to the ultimate purchaser. Any manufacturer who shall willfully fail to affix a proper label required by this section or any person who shall willfully remove, alter or mutilate a label prior to delivery of the truck to the ultimate purchaser is guilty of a misdemeanor. This section shall not apply to trucks for which the annual sales in Minnesota of the previous model year were less than 200.

Subd. 2. This section shall apply to new trucks having a gross vehicle weight of 9,000 pounds or less built after December 31, 1978.

History: 1977 c 385 s 1,2

### 168.274 DEFINITIONS.

The following definitions shall apply for the words or terms used in sections 168.274 to 168.276 unless other meaning is clearly apparent from the language or context.

"Motor vehicle" means and includes all vehicles propelled otherwise than by muscular power, excepting such vehicles as run only upon rails or tracks.

"New motor vehicle" means only newly manufactured motor vehicles and includes but is not limited to motorcycles, trailers, trucks, passenger cars and tractors.

"Used motor vehicle" means every motor vehicle, title to, or possession of, which has been transferred from the person who first acquired it from the manufacturer or dealer and has been so used as to become or is commonly known as secondlyind within the ordinary

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Section 4511.071

General Assembly: 114
Bill Number: Amended Sub. House Bill 707 / S 257 Eff 6-25-80
Effective Date: 1-1-1983

- (A) Except as provided in division (C) of this section, the owner of a vehicle shall be entitled to establish nonliability for prosecution for violation of an ordinance, resolution, or regulation enacted under division (A) of section 4511.07 of the Revised Code by proving the vehicle was in the care, custody, or control of a person other than the owner at the time of the violation pursuant to a written rental or lease agreement or affidavit providing that except for such agreement, no other business relationship with respect to the vehicle in question exists between the operator and
- (B) Proof that the vehicle was in the care, custody, or control of a person other than the owner shall be established by sending a copy of such written rental or lease agreement or affidavit to the prosecuting authority within thirty days from the date of receipt by the owner of the notice of violation. The furnishing of a copy of a written rental or lease agreement or affidavit shall be prima-facie evidence that a vehicle was in the care, custody, or control of a person other than the owner
- (C) This section does not apply to a violation of an ordinance, resolution, or regulation enacted under division (A) of section 4511.07 of the Revised Code if the ordinance, resolution, or regulation is one that is required to be enforced in compliance with Chapter 4521, of the Revised Code

Section 4521 09

General Assembly, 117
Bill Number, Amended Sub, House Bill 373 / HB 707 Eff 1-1-83
Effective Date: 10/09/89

- (A) An owner of a vehicle is not jointly liable with an operator of the vehicle whose act or omission resulted in a parking infraction for the parking infraction or any fine, penalty, or processing fee arising out of the parking infraction under this chapter if either of the following apply:
- (1) The owner answers the charge of the parking infraction under section 4521 06 or 4521 07 of the Revised Code, the answer denies that he committed the infraction and requests a hearing concerning the infraction, the owner additionally asserts and provides reasonable evidence at that time to prove that the vehicle, at the time of the commission of the parking infraction, was being used by the operator without the owner's express or implied consent, and the parking violations bureau, joint parking violations bureau, or traffic violations bureau, or the juvenile court, that has jurisdiction over the parking infraction determines that the vehicle was being used without the owner's express or implied consent at that time. If the bureau or juvenile court does not so the Revised Code
- (2) The owner answers the charge of the parking infraction under section 4521.06 or 4521.07 of the Revised Code, the answer denies that he committed the parking infraction, the owner additionally submits evidence at that time that proves that, at the time of the alleged commission of the infraction, the owner was engaged in the business of renting or leasing vehicles under written rental or lease agreements, and the owner additionally submits evidence that proves that, at the time of the alleged commission of the parking infraction, the vehicle in question was in the care, custody, or control of a person other than the owner pursuant to a written rental or lease

### agreement.

If the owner does not so prove, the parking violations bureau, joint parking violations bureau, or traffic violations bureau, or the juvenile court, shall conduct a hearing relative to the infraction according to section 4521.08 of the Revised Code

- (3) The owner, at a hearing concerning the parking infraction conducted in accordance with section 4521 08 of the Revised Code, proves that the vehicle, at the time of the parking infraction, was being used by the operator without the owner's express or implied consent or proves the facts described in division (A)(2) of this section
- (B) An owner of a vehicle who is engaged in the business of renting or leasing vehicles under written rental or lease agreements, but who does not satisfy the additional requirements of division (A)(2) of this section is not liable for any penalties or processing fees ansing out of a parking infraction involving the vehicle if at the time of the commission of the parking infraction, the vehicle was in the care, custody, or control of a person other than the owner pursuant to a written rental or lease agreement, and if the owner answers the charge of the parking infraction by denying that he committed the parking infraction or by paying the fine arising out of the parking infraction within thirty days after actual receipt of the parking ticket charging the infraction or, if the owner did not receive the parking ticket, within thirty days after receipt of the rotification of

Proof that the vehicle was in the care, custody, or control of a person other than the owner pursuant to a written rental or lease agreement at the time of the alleged parking infraction shall be established by sending a true copy of the rental or lease agreement or an affidavit to that effect to the parking violations bureau, joint parking violations bureau, or traffic violations bureau, or the juvenile court that has jurisdiction over the alleged parking infraction within thirty days after the date of receipt by the owner of the parking ticket charging the infraction or, if the owner did not receive the parking ticket, within thirty days after receipt of the notification of infraction. The submission of a true copy of a written rental or lease agreement or affidavit shall be pnma-facie evidence that a vehicle was in the care, custody, or control of a person other than the owner. The affidavit authorized by this section shall be accompanied by a postage-paid, self-addressed envelope, shall be in a form the registrar of motor vehicles shall prescribe, and shall include space for the parking violations bureau, joint parking violations bureau, or traffic violations bureau, or the juvenile court that has jurisdiction over the alleged parking infraction to indicate receipt of the affidavit. Within thirty days of receipt of the affidavit, the bureau or court shall return a receipted copy of the affidavit to the rental or lease company. In addition, any information required by division (A)(2) of this section may be provided on magnetic tape or another computer readable media in a format acceptable to the particular local authority.



## OHIO BUREAU OF MOTOR VEHICLES

AFFIDAVIT
Of Non-Liability For Parking Infractions

Re: TICKET NUMBER	DATE AFFIDAVIT MAILED	
DATE ISSUED	MAILED RECEIPT NUMBER	
TO: (NAME)		
ADDRESS (STREET) CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
POM: (NAME)		
ADDRESS (STREET) CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Chapter 4521 at	nd/or Ohio Revised Code Chapter 4511.0	71
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ADDRESS (STREET)	STATE	ZIP CODE
COUNTY OF:	SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	
he undersigned	e true as he/she verily believes.	t the statements an
(AFFIANT'S SIGNATURE)	Sworn to before me	and signed in
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Fax Reorders To:

The Ohio Alliance of Car Renting Agencies of The Ohio Vehicle Leasing Association @: 614.885.0526 or 900.622.3071

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PARKING CITATIONS REPORT

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PO BOX 2080 MILWAUKEE WI 53201-2080

PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT PO BOX 2080 MILWAUKEE WI 53201-2080 (414)-483-2147

NOVEMBER 22, 1999

PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT PO BOX 2080 MILWAUKEE WI 53201-2080

00181838-002 32182 CAR CORPORATIO MIDWEST 222 LAWE ST PO BOX 560 KAUKAUNA WI 54130-0560

\*no other notices everreceived

RE: CITY OF MILWAUKEE VIOLATIONS

ACCOUNT #: 00181838 REFERENCE #: 112957084

AMOUNT DUE: \$870.00 issued 3-5-93

\*\*\* DETACH UPPER PORTION AND RETURN WITH PAYMENT \*\*\*

ACCOUNT #: 00181838

REFERENCE #: 112957084

We expected to receive the balance of your account by now. Your inattention to your obligation will probably be very costly to you.

The bad debt you have incurred has been computerized and can become available to credit grantors such as banks, department stores, medical facilities, utilities and mortgage companies.

Wouldn't it be wise to clear up this debt now in order to save money and problems later on?

Mail your payment today ot call us at 414-483-2147 now to avoid future problems.

If you feel you have received this notice in error, call us at 414-483-2147 or send us your explaination in writing at the address shown below. Our staff will promptly get in touch with you to resolve this issue.

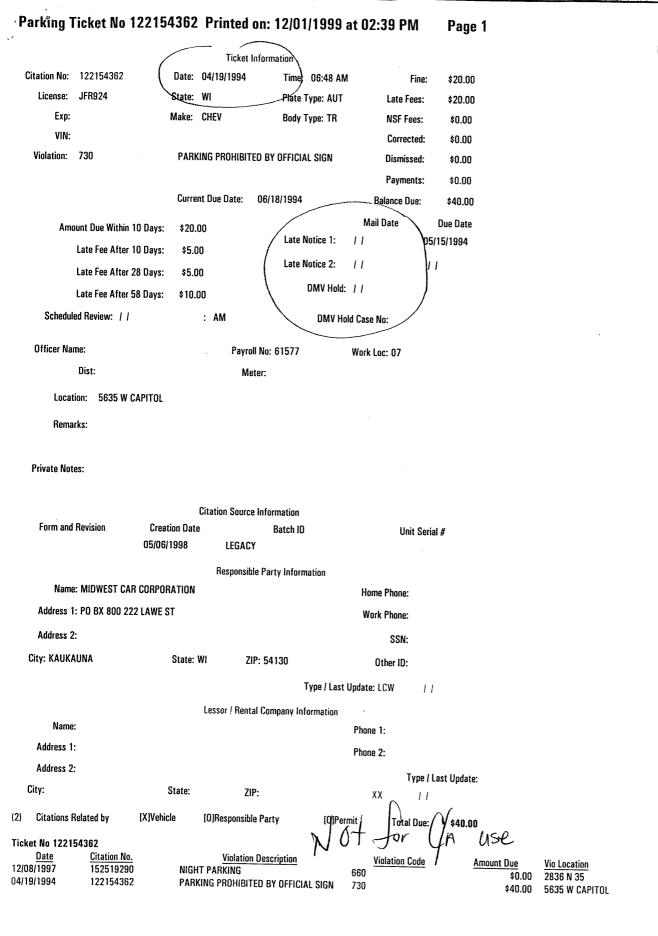
This is an attempt to collect a debt. Any information obtained will be used for that purpose. This collection agency is licensed by the Office of the Administrator of the Division of Banking, P.O.Box 7876, Madison, WI 53707.

\*\*\*\* VISA AND MASTERCARD GLADLY ACCEPTED\*\*\*

### Instructions for making payment...

- 1. Tear off the top portion of this letter along with your check or money order payable to the City of Milwaukee, and mail in the envelope provided. Do not send cash. Write the reference number shown above on your check or money order.
- 2. Payment can be made by credit card. (Master Card or VISA only) at any City of Milwaukee Violations Bureau Payment Center or by phone at 414-483-2147.
- 3. Mail payments to:

Professional Account Management, Inc., Collection Services Division P.O. Box 2080 Milwaukee, WI 53201-2080 Customer Service Phone: 414 483-2147 SE HABLA ESPANOL



PO BOX 2080 MILWAUKEE WI 53201-2080

PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT PO BOX 2080 MILWAUKEE WI 53201-2080 (414)-483-2147



DECEMBER 20, 1999

PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT PO BOX 2080 MILWAUKEE WI 53201-2080

00213604-002 19542 CAR CORPORATIO MIDWEST PO BX 800 222 LAWE ST KAUKAUNA WI 54130-2114

no notices RE: CITY OF MILWAUKEE VIOLATIONS ACCOUNT #: 00213604

REFERENCE #: 116468660 AMOUNT DUE: \$110.00

755 ned 7-29-23 KNZ149

\*\*\* DETACH UPPER PORTION AND RETURN WITH PAYMENT \*\*\*

ACCOUNT #: 00213604

REFERENCE #: 116468660

We expected to receive the balance of your account by now. Your inattention to your obligation will probably be very costly to you.

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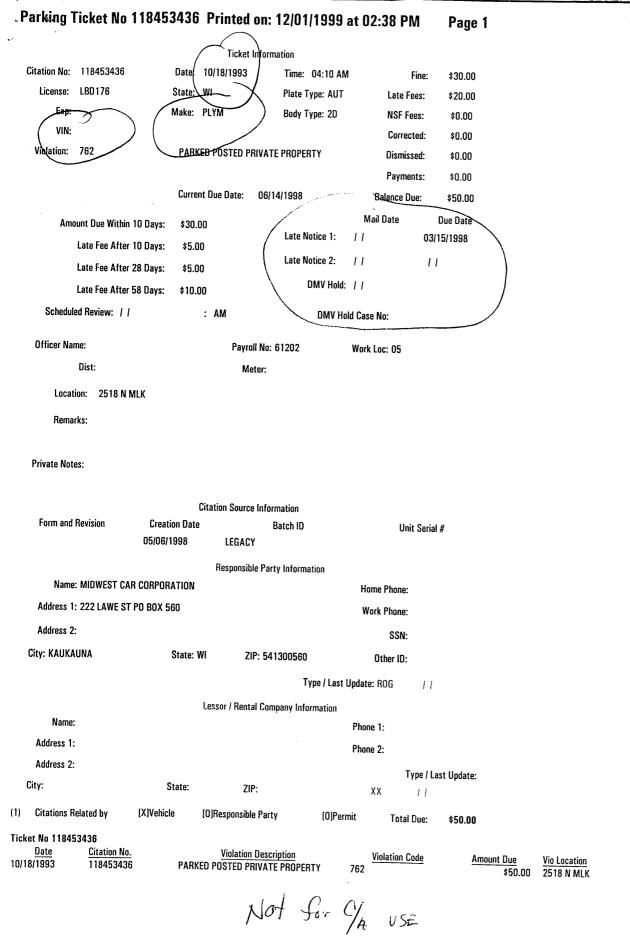
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PO BOX 2080 MILWAUKEE WI 53201-2080

PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT PO BOX 2080 MILWAUKEE WI 53201-2080 (414)-483-2147



NOVEMBER 11, 1999

Sect who: 6/26/98

Issued 5/5/98

No payment issued one refice because Sea-PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT PO BOX 2080 MILWAUKEE WI 53201-2080

00068779-002 40762 CAR CORPORATIO MIDWEST 222 LAWE ST PO BOX 560 KAUKAUNA WI 54130-0560

recewed

RE: CITY OF MILWAUKEE VIOLATIONS ACCOUNT #: 00068779 REFERENCE #: 287501734 AMOUNT DUE: \$150.00

\*\*\* DETACH UPPER PORTION AND RETURN WITH PAYMENT \*\*\*

ACCOUNT #: 00068779

REFERENCE #: 287501734

We expected to receive the balance of your account by now. Your inattention to your obligation will probably be very costly to you.

The bad debt you have incurred has been computerized and can become available to credit grantors such as banks, department stores, medical facilities, utilities and mortgage companies.

Wouldn't it be wise to clear up this debt now in order to save money and problems later on?

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This is an attempt to collect a debt. Any information obtained will be used for that purpose. This collection agency is licensed by the Office of the Administrator of the Division of Banking, P.O.Box 7876, Madison, WI 53707.

\*\*\*\* VISA AND MASTERCARD GLADLY ACCEPTED\*\*\*

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- 3. Mail payments to:

Professional Account Management, Inc., Collection Services Division P.O. Box 2080 Milwaukee, WI 53201-2080 Customer Service Phone: 414 483-2147 SE HABLA ESPANOL



Testimony before the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing, and Government Operations

by Senator Robert Wirch Senate Bill 360 February 9, 2000

Current Wisconsin law allows the Department of Transportation to suspend the vehicle registration of individuals with unpaid nonmoving citations such as parking tickets. The problem is that the rental agency first becomes aware of a citation only after the ticket has gone unpaid. Only then does the car rental agency receive the notice, and is then required to provide the local authority with the renter's name, address and driver's license information from its records.

If the renter does not does not respond to another notice within 30 days of it being mailed, the car rental firm is responsible for payment of 50% of the now-escalated ticket, or its vehicle registration can be suspended.

Senate Bill 360 would change this so that car rental companies would <u>only</u> be responsible if the required information has not been supplied. This change is consistent with the way other states handle the situation and would not unfairly penalize a third party for something over which they have no control.

The car rental company should not face the possibility of losing its vehicle registration for a problem of which they are unaware. This change is consistent with policies in other states.

Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions.

# TESTIMONY REGARDING SENATE BILL 360 360

# PRESENTED BY CITY OF MILWAUKEE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT LLC

TO
THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF
THE SENATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 9, 2000

### TESTIMONY REGARDING SB 630 CITY OF MILWAUKEE DPW AND PAM LLC FEBRUARY 9, 2000

The City of Milwaukee Department of Public Works and Professional Account Management LLC present this testimony regarding Senate Bill 630. The City of Milwaukee Department of Public Works administers parking enforcement and the processing of parking citations for the City. The City of Milwaukee issues more parking citations than any other issuing authority in the state of Wisconsin. In 1999 some 900,000 parking citations were issued in the City. Professional Account Management LLC is under contract to the Department of Public Works to operate the City of Milwaukee Violations Bureau and provide parking citation processing services. These services include the preparation and mailing of overdue notices for unpaid citations and collection of all parking citation revenue. On February 6, 2000, the Department of Public Works also became responsible for the 45 parking checkers employed by the City.

The changes proposed in SB 630 affect the sections of the Wisconsin State Statutes governing the responsibility of companies which lease or rent motor vehicles for parking citations issued to these vehicles, and the rules that issuing authorities must follow when processing and attempting to collect the fines or forfeitures for these parking citations. It appears that the leasing/rental companies want to have the legislature excuse them of any responsibility for these citations. We believe that this is a bad idea on several grounds.

Current law holds that if the leasing/rental company notifies the issuing authority of the name and address of the person in possession of the vehicle at the time of the citation, then the issuing authority must first attempt to collect the fine/forfeiture from such person. If the issuing authority is unable to collect from the renter or lessor, or the company does not provide notice of the renter/lessees name and address, then the lease/rental company must pay 50% of the original fine/forfeiture to avoid having the registration of the vehicle in question suspended. Under current law the issuing authority also has the ability to ask the Department of Motor Vehicles (the department) to refuse registration for all vehicles registered in the state of Wisconsin to the renter/lessee.

If this sounds complex and difficult to administer, that's because it is. However, the solution posed in SB 630 is worse. The analysis of this proposal provided by the Legislative Reference Bureau indicates that "As under current law, the lessor is liable for the parking ticket, unless the lessor identifies the renter or lessee." We disagree with their analysis and firmly believe that these changes are designed to create a situation where the lessor (leasing/rental company) bears no practical liability for the parking ticket.

This proposed legislation does allow the issuing authority to request refusal of registration for any other vehicles owned by a renter/lessee if the leasing/rental company provides notice of name and address. This is identical, in practice, to the current rules. However, since many people who lease vehicles in Wisconsin, and most people who rent vehicles in Milwaukee, do not have other vehicles registered in the state, the effectiveness of this section is limited. Under current law if the renter/lessee does not pay the forfeiture within a specified period of time, the issuing authority can hold the leasing/rental company responsible for the citation. If the company does not pay 50% of

### TESTIMONY REGARDING SB 630 CITY OF MILWAUKEE DPW AND PAM LLC FEBRUARY 9, 2000

the forfeiture, then the authority may ask the department to suspend the registration of the leased/rented vehicle. This mechanism was intended to give the authority leverage to collect forfeitures that would not be collectible from the renter/lessee.

The logic of holding the leasing/rental company responsible is consistent with the general rules of liability for parking citations. If you lend your vehicle to a friend and your friend receives a parking ticket while using your vehicle, you, as owner of the vehicle, are liable for the parking fine. If your friend does not tell you about the ticket and you first become aware of it when the overdue notice arrives in the mail, you are not only liable for the fine, but also for the late fees. The legislature has deemed it appropriate to mitigate liability for leasing/rental companies by requiring them to pay at least 50% of the forfeiture if the authority cannot collect from the renter/lessee. Now you are being asked to repeal section 345.28(5m)(c) and in effect absolve them of all responsibility.

Section 345(5m)(c) is the section of the law that allows the authority to request that the department suspend the registration of the leased/rented vehicle if the authority is unable to collect from the renter/lessee or the leasing/rental company. The leasing/rental company may then pay 50% of the forfeiture to effect a release of the registration suspension. Please note that this proposed legislation does not ask to amend this section so that it cannot be called into play if the leasing/rental company provides the name and address of the renter/lessee. Instead it calls for complete repeal of the entire section.

The proposed bill also amends the section of the current law that that mandates a payment of 50% of the original forfeiture by the lease/rental company to effect a release of a registration suspension. The 50% of the forfeiture requirement is amended to "some Part" of the forfeiture. To us this means that if 345(5m)(c) is not repealed but this language is amended, then a payment of 1 penny on a \$50 forfeiture would be enough to get the registration hold released. You can be sure that the many private residents of Wisconsin who will have to pay their entire forfeitures to get their registration holds released would like a similar deal.

When one analyzes the practical effect of this proposed legislation it is easy to see that the proposal effectively absolves the leasing/rental companies from any liability for parking tickets issued to vehicles they own. If the leasing/rental company provides notice of the name and address of the renter/lessee, then the authority may take action against the renter/lessee. But, as is often the case, if the leasing/rental company does not provide the notice or if the authority is not able to collect from the renter/lessee, than under these new rules the authority has no recourse against the leasing/rental company. And if 345(5m)(c) is not repealed but the language in 345.28(4)(e) is amended from 50% of the forfeiture to "some part" of the forfeiture you can be assured that authorities will be releasing registration suspensions for payments of \$0.01.

In 1999 the City of Milwaukee Violations Bureau collected \$375,000 on parking citations issued to leased or rented vehicles. There is also \$113,000 still owing from parking tickets issued in 1999 to leased or rented vehicles. Our experience indicates that about 50% of the payments received on parking tickets issued to leased or rented vehicles are

### TESTIMONY REGARDING SB 630 CITY OF MILWAUKEE DPW AND PAM LLC FEBRUARY 9, 2000

collected from leasing/rental companies. In most of these cases the renter or lessee of the vehicle does not live in Wisconsin or does not have any vehicles, other than a leased vehicle, registered in the state. Adoption of SB 630 would severely limit, if not completely eliminate the ability of the City to collect on these citations. In addition the City would have to spend up to \$5000 to modify its citation processing software to comply with the new rules.

Yes, the system is complicated and difficult to administer and one could argue that rule changes to simplify the process are desirable. However, one could also argue that the easiest way to accomplish this would be to treat the leasing/rental companies the same way regular citizens are treated. That is, hold them liable for all the parking citations issued to vehicles that they own. The companies could then recover the forfeitures and an appropriate handling charge from the renter of lessee of the vehicle. Language could be inserted in the lease/rental contracts to allow this process, if it's not already there. The resulting system would be fair, simple and easy to administer.

We ask the committee to consider this testimony and the practical effects of the proposed Senate Bill 630 and vote No when asked to approve or recommend this measure.