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(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ...  
PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

2009-10

(session year)

Senate

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

Committee on ... Transportation, Tourism,  
Forestry, and Natural Resources (SC-TTFNR)

**COMMITTEE NOTICES ...**

- Committee Reports ... **CR**
- Executive Sessions ... **ES**
- Public Hearings ... **PH**

**INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL**

- Appointments ... **Appt** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Clearinghouse Rules ... **CRule** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)  
(**ab** = Assembly Bill)                      (**ar** = Assembly Resolution)                      (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)  
(**sb** = Senate Bill)                              (**sr** = Senate Resolution)                              (**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)
- Miscellaneous ... **Misc**

## Senate

### Record of Committee Proceedings

#### **Committee on Transportation, Tourism, Forestry, and Natural Resources**

##### **Senate Bill 278**

Relating to: U-turns on highways and providing a penalty.

By Senators Sullivan, Kanavas, Taylor, Holperin, Plale, Hansen and Grothman; cosponsored by Representatives Steinbrink, Nerison, Townsend, Brooks, Petrowski, Vos, M. Williams and Turner.

August 28, 2009      Referred to Committee on Transportation, Tourism, Forestry, and Natural Resources.

##### September 17, 2009      **PUBLIC HEARING HELD**

Present:      (7)      Senators Holperin, Sullivan, Plale, Hansen, Leibham, Kedzie and Grothman.

Absent:      (0)      None.

##### Appearances For

- John Sobotik — WI DOT
- Jim Sullivan — 5th Senate District

##### Appearances Against

- None.

##### Appearances for Information Only

- None.

##### Registrations For

- Pete Rusch — Former WI DOT Engineer
- Joanna Bush — WI DOT

##### Registrations Against

- None.

##### Registrations for Information Only

- None.

##### September 30, 2009      **EXECUTIVE SESSION HELD**

Present:      (7)      Senators Holperin, Sullivan, Plale, Hansen, Leibham, Kedzie and Grothman.

Absent:      (0)      None.

Moved by Senator Grothman, seconded by Senator Plale that **Senate Bill 278** be recommended for passage.

Ayes: (7) Senators Holperin, Sullivan, Plale, Hansen, Leibham, Kedzie and Grothman.

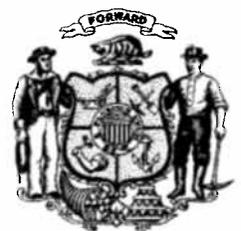
Noes: (0) None.

PASSAGE RECOMMENDED, Ayes 7, Noes 0

Elizabeth Novak  
Committee Clerk



# WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



# SB 278 – U-turns

Date?

## Background

### 1. National Standard

- Wisconsin is the only state in the union that flatly bans u-turns at all controlled intersections. (Transportation synthesis report).
- Most people violate the law unknowingly –
  - People make u-turns at intersection breaks in boulevard medians (illegal because of stop sign control on cross street).
  - People make u-turns at intersections lacking “No U-turn” signs.
  - People obey traffic officers who tell them to turn around (Unbelievably today’s law requires drivers to disobey an officer and decline to make the u-turn.)
- Almost all states now permit u-turns
- This bill was drafted with an eye on the Uniform Traffic Code, which states use as a starting point for drafting their traffic laws. (Wisconsin used a model for its traffic code during its last rewrite in the late 1950’s)

### 2. Acquisition Access

- U-turns are a useful device for controlling traffic flow and providing reasonable access to businesses and residences along divided highways.
- Access issues have become a major cost concern for highway construction cases. Providing better access along divided highways will reduce acquisition costs for DOT and local units of government.

### 3. Passing left turning vehicles

- Current law prohibits drivers from using a paved shoulder to pass a left-turning vehicle.
- WisDOT designs its highways to allow that maneuver so that traffic doesn’t come to a complete halt. Drivers have been trained that it is ok to pass a left-turning vehicle so long as the driver does not *leave the pavement*.

- 2001 Court of Appeals decision in the case Kaufman v. Postle, 2001 WI App 86 interpreted the statute differently from the way drivers and DOT had interpreted it for years.
- Case held that drivers cannot use a paved shoulder to pass a stopped left-turning vehicle.
- WisDOT has had separate bill drafts on the issue for a number of years, and this bill needs to address that particular section, so we had the draft written to over rule that decision and recommend the law be amended to overturn Kaufman v. Postle and return us to the law believed existed before that decision.

### **Proposal --What SB 278 Does:**

#### U-Turns at Intersections:

- Allows u-turns at intersections when directed by an officer.
- Must be made in a safe manner.
- Cannot interfere with oncoming traffic.
- U-turning vehicle in the intersection has the right-of-way over a vehicle making a right-turn on red. (That is the law today, right-turn-on-red vehicles must yield to traffic in the intersection).
- No backing maneuvers permitted as part of a u-turn at an intersection.

#### U-Turns mid-block

- Still allowed.
- Imposes 500' visibility requirement.
- Y-turns mid-block are still permitted movements.

#### Roundabouts

- This bill does NOT deal with roundabouts at all.

#### Position and Movement -- pretty much like the rules for left-turning vehicles.

- Allows vehicles to make a left-turn on a green arrow.
- Vehicles must make u-turns from the furthest left lane.
- The u-turn is made left of the center of the intersection, just like a left turn.
- U-turns can be made over crossable medians.
- No requirement to finish a u-turn in a particular lane.
- On 3-lane highways, u-turns are made from the center lane.

