

ROBERT L. COWLES

Wisconsin State Senator, 2nd Senate District

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Testimony on 2023 Senate Bill 60

Senator Robert Cowles

Senate Committee on Transportation and Local Government

March 15th, 2023

Thank you, Chairman Tomczyk and committee members, for allowing me to testify on 2023 Senate Bill 60, which exempts family members from vehicle title ownership transfer fees.

Current Wisconsin state law holds that, whenever one person attempts to transfer the title of a motor vehicle over to another person, the new owner must pay a \$157 fee for the title certificate. The new owner is also responsible for paying a \$7.50 supplemental fee for the title transfer to occur.

However, thanks to 2019 Wisconsin Act 165, these fees are exempted if ownership of the vehicle is transferred to the spouse or partner of someone who is recently deceased. It is fitting that, on top of the grief caused by the death of a loved one, that the last thing that should be on their mind at such a difficult time is paying nearly more than a hundred and fifty dollars to handle the fees if the vehicle stays in the family.

Senate Bill 60 expands the criteria for exemption of these fees in the event of the vehicle owner's death. In addition to the spouse or partner, this bill would waive the transfer fees – including the supplemental fee – for the parents, grandparents, siblings, children, and grandchildren of the deceased, as well as their stepparents or stepchildren.

The logic for this extension follows a similar path: when a loved one – a parent, a child, a grandparent, whatever they may be – passes away, the absolute last thing they should be worrying about is who will pay the fees and take the time to handle the official transfer of ownership.



CINDI DUCHOW

(608) 266-3007

Toll-Free (888) 534-0099

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 99th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Rep.Duchow@legis.wi.gov

RepDuchow.com

P.O. Box 8952

Madison, WI 53708-8952

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Thank you Chairman Tomczyk and members of the Committee for this opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 60, relating to fees for certain motor vehicle title transfers. I would also like to extend my thanks to Sen. Cowles for his work on this legislation.

Dealing with the practical and administrative aspects of a loved one's passing can be extremely challenging and emotionally draining, especially when you're also dealing with the grief of losing them. The responsibilities are often time-consuming and expensive.

Senate Bill 60 is aimed at correcting one small aspect of these challenges. Currently, for a vehicle to be transferred out of the name of a deceased individual, Wisconsin has a \$157 title transfer fee and a \$7.50 supplemental title fee. Under this bill, those fees are waived when a vehicle is transferred upon a person's death to an immediate family member - a spouse, grandparent, parent, sibling, child, stepchild, stepparent, or grandchild, or the spouse of a grandparent, parent, sibling, child, stepchild, stepparent, or grandchild.

There's an old saying that only two things in life are certain: death and taxes. Getting hit with one last bill from the government, on top of a loved one's death, just seems like a low blow. SB 60 makes our government a bit more human, and provides a small bit of relief to grieving families.

Thank you.