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AB-1606 Driver's license renewal alternatives. (2023-2024)

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Assembly Bill No. 1606

CHAPTER 373

An act to add and repeal Section 12814.4 of the Vehicle Code, relating to driver's licenses.

[Approved by Governor October 07, 2023. Filed with Secretary of State October 07, 2023.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1606, Gipson. Driver's license renewal alternatives.

Existing law requires an application for renewal of a driver's license to be made at an office of the Department of Motor Vehicles by the person to whom the license was issued. Existing law also requires renewal of a license to be under the terms and conditions prescribed by the department.

This bill, until January 1, 2035, would authorize the Director of Motor Vehicles to establish a program to evaluate the traffic safety and other effects of renewing driver's licenses by virtual or other remote processes. The bill would prohibit the program from granting such a renewal to a person who is 70 years of age or older without a test of the eyesight of the applicant. The bill would also prohibit the department from renewing a license by virtual or other remote processes when the license has been previously renewed by that method or by mail 2 consecutive times for 5-year periods or if the applicant is 80 years of age or older. The bill would authorize the director to terminate the renewal by virtual or other remote processes at any time. The bill would require the department to provide a report on the program to the Legislature on or before January 1, 2034.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 12814.4 is added to the Vehicle Code, to read:

12814.4. (a) The director may establish a program to evaluate the traffic safety and other effects of renewing driver's licenses by virtual or other remote processes, in lieu of submitting an application at an office of the department pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 12814. Pursuant to that program, the department may renew driver's licenses by virtual or other remote processes.

(b) The director may terminate the renewal by virtual or other remote processes authorized by this section at any time.

(c) On or before January 1, 2034, the department shall provide a report to the Legislature and relevant policy committees detailing the program established under this section.

(1) The report shall include the steps the department took to prevent individuals other than the applicant from taking the knowledge test, the number of individuals on an annual basis that opted to take the knowledge examination virtually or by other

remote processes, and the number of individuals that opted to submit a test of their eyesight by virtual or other remote processes, and the process the department took to verify the authenticity of the tests submitted to the department.

(2) The report shall be submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government Code.

(d) A renewal by virtual or other remote processes under this program shall not be granted to a person who is 70 years of age or older without a test of the eyesight of the applicant.

(e) The department shall not renew a driver's license by virtual or other remote processes that has been previously renewed by mail or by virtual or other remote processes two consecutive times for five-year periods, or by an applicant that is 80 years of age or older.

(f) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2035, and as of that date is repealed.