

October 14, 2011

To: The Honorable Members of the Massachusetts Transportation Committee

Re: "Molly's Bill" S1798, also known as "EZ-ID"

Dear Members of the Committee,

On Wednesday, October 19th, you will hold a Hearing for Molly's Bill, Senate Bill S1798, also known as "EZ-ID"...an act to enhance the license plate system in Massachusetts. In 1903 Massachusetts was the first state in the nation to issue license plates; Massachusetts can be the first again on this important initiative for public safety.

This is the fourth legislative session that this Bill has been in the Transportation Committee. Most of you are new to this Committee, so please allow us to give you some background information prior to Wednesday's Hearing, which can also be found at www.ez-id.org, and on Facebook under EZ-ID.

If you look at two license plates, one being a standard general issue plate with random numbers and letters, and one being a Red Sox specialty plate, with the Red Sox logo on it...which one would be easier to identify? Of course the license plate which has the Red Sox graphic would be easier, plus there are fewer characters to remember. EZ-ID uses the same principles by including one randomly assigned recognizable symbol, such as a star, heart, diamond, or square, etc., on each general issue license plate. These symbols are used just like a number or letter, but they give a graphic, which as cognitive studies show...that even 2 ½ year old children can identify symbols.

Random numbers and letters are in fact symbols themselves, which represent sounds and quantities, but when arranged randomly on a license plate...they are far too difficult to identify and report...even for adults. Kindergarten eye charts even use symbols, not numbers and letters, because children can readily identify symbols. With the many mathematical combinations available, Massachusetts and most other states would not need to use any more than 5 characters, including a symbol, therefore allowing the fonts to be larger and easier to see, and there would be fewer characters to remember and report.

Background: EZ-ID is a non-profit organization which was created by Gary Richard after the abductions of Molly Bish and Elizabeth Smart, because the key to most abductions is the private vehicle. The key to identify the vehicle of course is the license plate. This Program is a critical tool which law enforcement and the public need, to identify and use their cell phones to report any type of crime or accident, etc. The greatest responsibility that we have as a society is the safety of our children, and we are failing at this responsibility. EZ-ID will make a true difference.

How does EZ-ID work? The EZ-ID plates have a code over to the left very similar to the specialty plates. A Red Sox plate has an "R" over an "S" so that the police and Registry can input the plate information through any standard computer Keyboard. An EZ-ID plate has a letter such as an "S" for a "star," over a number such as a "3" which tells the position of the star in the plate's registration, which can also be input through the standard computer keyboard. This Program would be mandatory for every general issue license plate, and it does not displace specialty plates, low number plates or vanity plates, as these are already easier to identify.

EZ-ID was refined after numerous meetings at the Statehouse with local police, the Massachusetts State Police, legislators, citizens, and with input from the Registry. EZ-ID was then sanctioned by CJIS, the Criminal Justice Information System Division of the FBI, who said that it was a “good idea” and that “it would work nationally,” which is the intent of the Program. At the Press Conference announcing the legislation...Bob Barry, the President of the Massachusetts Safety Officers League at the time, called EZ-ID “a blessing” for law enforcement.

Recently in Maine, the Texas mother who had murdered her son, was apprehended due to the identification of a Navy symbol sticker, which was on the bumper of her blue truck. There is a reason why we use symbols on road signs, keyboards, on company logos, virtually everywhere in our daily lives...because they give instant identification. EZ-ID does this for license plates, which would help on Amber Alerts for child abduction, when every second is critical. Some statistics:

Every 40 seconds in the USA, a child is reported missing or abducted. That translates to over **2,000** per day (under the age of 18) or 800,000 per year.

Of the 800,000 children reported missing annually, approximately **69,000** are abducted.

When an abduction leads to the death of a child, every second is critical...

44% will be dead within the first hour, 74% within 3 hours, and 91% within 24 hours

More than 20% of the Children reported to the Center for missing and Exploited Children are **found dead**.

EZ-ID would also be help in reporting hit and runs, general crime, accidents, and for school bus operators reporting bad drivers. It would also help toll takers, gas stations, and convenience stores reporting drive-offs, etc. EZ-ID was also seen to improve infra red detection devices, used by law enforcement, and in toll taking etc.

We have met with Registrar and her staff, and we were invited to interface with their computer upgrade team, as they go through their three year upgrade. We were also invited to visit their plate production facility to observe their process. With this time table and with this Registry involvement, we feel that Massachusetts can structure a model for the rest of the country to follow. There are also other states who have pledged to roll the Program out with Massachusetts.

What about the cost? The EZ-ID plates would be mandatory for all general issue plates, but the state(s) would also generate new incremental revenues through the way that symbols can also be used creatively on new vanity plates, such as “*DIAMOND*” GIRL and ROCK “*STAR*”...the state could also offer new low number plates for a modest cost. Each year the Registry holds a lottery for low number plates that get turned in, as they are in such demand. In summary, EZ-ID works...and it pays for itself.

Recently I was filmed on the TV Show “The Shark Tank”...which will air on ABC in January. I did this for the sole purpose of bringing attention to EZ-ID for the country, and we discussed the legislation in Massachusetts. In bringing forward important tools like EZ-ID, we fully understand and appreciate that such matters need careful consideration, but after 6+ years, we ask that this Committee take positive action to move this legislation forward. History will repeat itself and when more of these tragedies occur, we will all be asked if we have done everything that we could have done to prevent these crimes, and to minimize the cost in terms of human suffering, and in terms of the very real financial costs to society . I implore you to join with us, and with law enforcement, to enhance the safety of the Massachusetts citizens. We ask that your

fellow legislators be given the opportunity to vote on this important measure themselves, on behalf of their constituents.

Thank you in advance for your attention to Senate Bill S1798, please let me know if you have any questions, or you would like to meet in order to discuss EZ-ID further. A one page overview is also attached for your reference.

Sincerely,
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