



Delaware House of Representatives House Majority Caucus

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GOVERNOR SIGNS BILL WAIVING LICENSE LATE FEES **FOR ACTIVE GUARDSMEN**

Rep. Carson's HB 483 exempts National Guard soldiers from fees from expired licenses

HARRINGTON – With Delaware National Guardsmen looking on, Governor Jack Markell signed legislation on Thursday that would exempt active-duty Guardsmen from paying late fees to renew state-issued licenses. The signing ceremony, which kicked off Governor's Day at the Delaware State Fair, took place at the Delaware National Guard tent on the Harrington fairgrounds.

Sponsored by Rep. Bill Carson, D-Smyrna, House Bill 483 would give all National Guard members who are called to active duty outside the state a 90-day grace period from the time they return to the state to renew their licenses. Soldiers would have to present appropriate credentials and pay the license renewal fee within 90 days of returning to Delaware.

"This change in law makes it easier for National Guard members who serve our country away from home," Governor Markell said. "We appreciate the sacrifices they make to support our country."

Rep. Carson said he was concerned about how Guardsmen could return home to find their driver's license or other state registrations have expired and face mounting late fees. The new law will help avert those costs.

"These are brave men and women who put their personal lives on hold while they are serving our country – often in harm's way," Rep. Carson said. "We want to ensure they are not assessed any late fees if their licenses expire while overseas and give them an opportunity to get their lives back in order when they return home."

According to the new law, "state-issued licenses" include vehicle registrations and driver's licenses, hunting, trapping and fishing licenses and professional licenses.

“We can never do enough to support our servicemen and servicewomen,” said Rep. Bob Walls, D-Milford and a co-sponsor of HB 483. “If it weren’t for our armed services, we wouldn’t be here enjoying the freedoms we have today.”

Maj. Gen. Frank Vavala, adjutant general of the Delaware National Guard, noted that Guardsmen have been deployed throughout Iraq and Afghanistan in recent years, including the Guard’s 262nd Component Repair Company, which returned home in April after spending nine months completing nearly 150 convoy security missions in Iraq.

“Any time we take into consideration the service and sacrifice our members make, that sends a powerful message of support,” Gen. Vavala said. “That’s exactly what this bill does.”

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