

AB 1272 - Department of Motor Vehicles: occupational licensees

SUMMARY

AB 1272 would prohibit businesses with an occupational license issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles from using the acronym "DMV," the Department of Motor Vehicles logogram, or the words "Department of Motor Vehicles" in their website domain name.

EXISTING LAW

Under current law, Section 25 of the Vehicle Code, the holder of an occupational license from the Department of Motor Vehicles is barred from utilizing the acronym "DMV," the Department of Motor Vehicles logogram, or the words "Department of Motor Vehicles" in their business name or telephone number. However, this provision does not cover website domain names.

ISSUE

The DMV issues occupational licenses to businesses operating in the automobile and driving space. This is done in an effort to monitor and regulate the services that are offered by these providers. Currently, occupational license holders are prohibited from using the acronym "DMV," the Department of Motor Vehicles Logogram, or the words "Department of Motor Vehicles" in their business name or telephone number. This is done in an effort to prevent confusion or misrepresentation.

Currently, this prohibition does not apply to website domain names, resulting in some occupational license holders using the DMV acronym or the words "Department of Motor Vehicles" in their website domains. This has resulted in the proliferation of websites that may cause confusion or obfuscate the fact that they are not officially the DMV. Examples of these websites include DMV.com and DMV.org, but there is a long list of additional website domains.

Unfortunately, websites with domain names similar to these cause significant confusion for individuals seeking DMV services. This can lead to consumers accidentally visiting the

wrong website for a specific DMV service. Oftentimes, these service providers oftentimes charge more for services that could have been obtained for cheaper directly from the DMV. This can also lead to the inadvertent disclosure of sensitive personal information to a non-government entity.

With internet fraud all too common and our aging populations struggling to distinguish between legitimate websites and bad actors, misleading website domains that include DMV labelling only serve to harm consumers.

SOLUTION

AB 1272 provides a common sense solution to curb misleading business practices and fraud. By applying the same restrictions currently imposed upon business names and telephone numbers, this bill brings much needed parity to how occupational license holders are allowed to represent their services.

AB 1272 would simply add website domain names to the list of prohibited uses. This change is a straightforward and simple solution to help protect California consumers.

SIMILAR LEGISLATION

AB 2183 (2020, Mathis) – Department of Motor Vehicles: Occupation Licenses – Hearing Postponed

SUPPORT

None on File.

OPPOSITION

None on File.

CO-AUTHORS

None on File.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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