

**REPORT OF THE
CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST**

DATE: May 7, 2013

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections and Intergovernmental Relations
Committee

FROM: Gerry F. Miller *Gerry F. Miller* Council File No: 13-0002-S27
Chief Legislative Analyst Assignment No: 13-02-0110

SUBJECT: Resolution (LaBonge - Englander) to support or sponsor legislation to increase
the Vehicle License Fee in order to fund high school driver's education

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt Resolution (LaBonge - Englander) to include in the City's
2013 - 2014 State Legislative Program SUPPORT for or SPONSORSHIP of legislation that
would increase the California Vehicle License Fee to fund high school driver's education
courses.

SUMMARY

On February 6, 2013, a Resolution (LaBonge - Englander) was introduced to support or sponsor
legislation that would increase the Vehicle License Fee in order to provide funding for driver's
education classes in California high schools. The Resolution states that because of budget cuts,
schools across the state have been forced to reduce or eliminate driver's education course
offerings. The Resolution further states that these classes are mandatory for individuals under 18
years of age who want to get their driver's license. The Resolution also states that these classes
not only provide an important benefit to students, but to all motorists who share the road with
these young drivers.

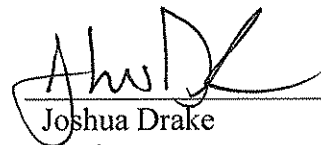
The Resolution states that, because of the benefit to the public these classes create, new ways of
funding driver's education should be examined, and that a modest increase to the Vehicle
License Fee would be a sufficient source of revenue. The Resolution, therefore, seeks an official
position of the City of Los Angeles to support or sponsor legislation which would raise the
Vehicle License Fee in order to provide funding for high school driver's education courses.

BACKGROUND

Driver's education consists of approximately 30 hours of classroom instruction that prepares an
individual for the operation of a motor vehicle. In California, minors are required to take a
driver's education course in order to obtain a learner's permit. This training is valuable for
young drivers, and assists them in learning to drive in a safe manner. These courses are
technically required to be offered by high schools in the state. However, these programs have
been cut in many schools as a result of budget constraints. The state has not provided specific
funding for driver's education courses since 1990, and often, driver's education courses are the
first to be eliminated when a school needs to reduce its spending. Further, even when schools
provide a driver's education course, they often do not offer the behind-the-wheel training
component required for minors seeking to obtain a driver's license.

As high schools are required to offer driver's education courses under California law, it seems reasonable to dedicate funding for these programs in high schools. The Vehicle License Fee would be a reasonable source of funds for these programs.

The Vehicle License Fee is assessed on an annual basis, and was created by the State as an alternative to a property tax on an automobile. The Vehicle License Fee is determined by the purchase price of a vehicle, or the value of the vehicle when it was acquired. The Vehicle License Fee for a specific vehicle decreases every year for the first 11 years of the vehicle's life. As of 2011, the Vehicle License Fee in California is 0.65% of the value of the vehicle. A modest increase could provide adequate funding for driver's education throughout the state, while having a minimal impact on the Vehicle License Fee of California drivers. While California voters have voiced their displeasure with increases to the Vehicle License Fee in the past, a modest increase specifically to fund driver's education may not be as unpopular as previous attempts to raise the fee.



Joshua Drake
Analyst

GFM:MF:jwd

Attachment: Resolution (LaBonge - Englander)

13-0002-527

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, as a result of budget cuts, high schools across California have been forced to reduce or eliminate driver's education classes; and

WHEREAS, California law requires drivers license applicants under 18 years old take a driver's education course; students who cannot afford private driver's education courses are forced to wait until turning 18 to apply for a license and may never take a driver's education course, thereby missing the benefits of driver's education; and

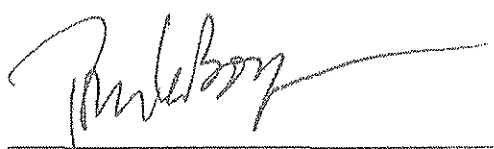
WHEREAS, driver's education provides valuable knowledge for young motorists, making them safer and more responsible drivers, to the benefit of all who share the road with them; and

WHEREAS, as the benefits of driver's education are enjoyed by all motorists, all motorists should help fund these programs; and

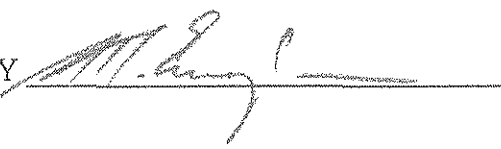
WHEREAS, a modest increase to the California Vehicle License Fee, paid by all California drivers, could be a source of funds for driver's education courses; and

WHEREAS, the City of Los Angeles should support efforts to reinstitute and fund driver's education courses in high schools;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2013 - 2014 State Legislative Program SUPPORT for or SPONSORSHIP of legislation that would increase the Vehicle License Fee to fund high school driver's education programs.

PRESENTED BY 
TOM LABONGE
Councilmember, 4th District



SECONDED BY 

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