

# [2015 Session] Modify Penalties for the Offense of Driving With an Invalid License

## Policy Background:

Currently, the offense of “Driving While License Invalid” (e.g., suspended license) is a fine-only Class C misdemeanor unless it is a person’s second offense, in which case it becomes a Class B misdemeanor and warrants jail time.

Texas policy-makers should cap the penalty for Driving While License Invalid at a Class C misdemeanor, to reserve costly jail beds for those who pose a threat to public safety.

## Key Facts:

- In Fiscal Year 2014, nearly 30,000 Class B misdemeanor cases were added to Texas court dockets for “DWLS/DWIL” [Driving with License Suspended / Driving with an Invalid License].[\[1\]](#)
- Also during that time, 10,461 misdemeanants were sentenced in a Statutory County Court to local jail for DWLS/DWIL.

And 808 misdemeanants were sentenced in a Constitutional County Court to a local jail for DWLS/DWIL.[\[2\]](#)

- Current policies pose significant costs to county taxpayers in terms of arrest, prosecution, public defense, and jail time.

## Relevant Bill:

- **Bill Number:** [HB 1567](#) (Turner, Sylvester)  
**Bill Caption:** Relating to the offense of driving while license invalid.  
**TCJE Materials:** [Fact Sheet](#)  
**Hearing Notice:** House Transportation Committee, [Notice of Public Hearing on April 23, 2015](#)  
**Archived Hearing Video:** House Transportation Committee, [04/023/15 Video](#) [TCJE testimony begins at 00:42:02]

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[1] Office of Court Administration, *Statutory County Courts: Activity Detail from September 1, 2013 to August 31, 2014*, p. 3;  
<http://www.txcourts.gov/media/696423/3-SCC-Activity-Detail-fy-2014-pdf.pdf> [25,774 New Cases Filed]. Also see: Constitutional County Courts, *Activity Detail from September 1, 2013 to August 31, 2014*, p. 1;  
<http://www.txcourts.gov/media/701752/3-CCC-Activity-Detail-2014.pdf> [4,029 New Cases Filed].

[2] Ibid.