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Some bills left out as session nears end

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Several bills are falling by the wayside in the Tennessee legislature, including one to ban dirty movies on car televisions that others can see, as legislative committees begin winding up their work for this session.

State Rep. Bubba Pleasant, R-Arlington, asked yesterday to take off notice his bill to impose a fine of \$2-\$50 for someone convicted of showing an offensive videotape in a way that other motorists or pedestrians could see it from outside the car.

Off notice means it's been taken off a committee agenda until further notice and not likely to resurface in the current session.

Another bill taken off notice proposed that private airstrip owners not be liable for injuries to anyone using their field.

A few bills were delayed until next week, which is expected to be the last meetings of some committees this year.

Included was a bill to establish a "predatory lending law" and one that would prohibit immigrants and others from obtaining a Tennessee driver's license without a Social Security number or federal immigration papers.

The license issue yesterday pitted out-of-state interests, who say the move is needed to help combat terrorism, against local law enforcement officials, who support driver testing and licensing as a safety measure with or without a Social Security number.

The bill is an effort to undo a 2001 law that says a Social Security number is not required for identification when one seeks a driver's license.

"There's not one scintilla of evidence that your roads are safer since the 'bad' bill was passed," Jim Staudenraus of the Federation for American Immigration Reform in New York told the House Transportation Committee.

He was joined in support of changing the law by Peter Gadiel of Connecticut, who is with 9/11 Families for a Secure America.

"The driver's license is a terrorist's tool," said Gadiel, who had a son who died in the World Trade Center attack.

"It makes him one of us," he said, adding that licenses "legitimize illegal aliens."

Pulaski Police Chief Arthur Heun stood to say that he in no way supported undocumented immigrants but that the law, as it stands, is helpful to law enforcement officials.

Denying driver's licenses on the grounds of a Social Security number will mean more people on the roads who have not been through a driver's proficiency test and will make it "considerably" more costly for communities, he said.

"A driver's license is not going to legitimize any of these people," he said.

License applicants are required to show two items that prove residency and two forms of ID.

The license also gives law enforcement agents a place to start when they need to investigate people, Heun said.

Undocumented immigrants and people who have waited years for immigration officials to process their citizenship have no Social Security numbers, advocates say.

The proposed change could mean the state loses \$150,000 or more in driver's license revenue, which reduces its chance of passage because the state needs the money in budget-cutting times.