

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 4577

By Delegates Hornby, Kyle, Heckert, Crouse, Criss,
Sheedy, McGeehan, Flanigan, Hanshaw (Mr.
Speaker), Akers, and Maynor

[Introduced January 20, 2026; referred to the
Committee on Government Organization]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §17B-2-7 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating
2 to issuance of driver licenses; authorizing rulemaking to enter reciprocity with foreign
3 countries; and creating a reciprocity agreement with the Republic of Ireland.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 2. ISSUANCE OF LICENSE, EXPIRATION AND RENEWAL.

§17B-2-7. Examination of applicants.

1 (a) Upon the presentment of the applicant's certified copy of the birth certificate issued by a
2 state or other governmental entity responsible for vital records or a valid and unexpired passport
3 issued by the United States government, as evidence that the applicant is of lawful age and
4 verifiable identity, the Division of Motor Vehicles shall examine every applicant for a license to
5 operate a motor vehicle in this state, except as otherwise provided in this section. The examination
6 shall include a test of the applicant's eyesight, the applicant's ability to read and understand
7 highway signs regulating, warning, and directing traffic, the applicant's knowledge of the traffic
8 laws of this state, and the applicant's knowledge of the effects of alcohol upon persons and the
9 dangers of driving a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol. The examination shall also
10 include an actual demonstration of ability to exercise ordinary and reasonable control in the
11 operation of a motor vehicle, and any further physical and mental examination as the Division of
12 Motor Vehicles considers necessary to determine the applicant's fitness to operate a motor vehicle
13 safely upon the highways.

14 (b) The commissioner shall propose legislative rules for promulgation pursuant to §29A-3-
15 1 *et seq.* of this code concerning the examination of applicants for licenses and the qualifications
16 required of applicants, and the examination of applicants by the division shall be in accordance
17 with the rules. The rules shall provide for the viewing of educational material or films on the
18 medical, biological, and psychological effects of alcohol upon persons, the dangers of driving a
19 motor vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, and the criminal penalties and administrative
20 sanctions for alcohol and drug related motor vehicle violations. The rules shall also provide for

21 entering reciprocity agreements with foreign countries. The rules shall specify that the driver
22 license standards of the foreign country shall be comparable to those of this state. The rules shall
23 also require foreign drivers, who are operating a motor vehicle in West Virginia under such a
24 reciprocity agreement, to comply with the compulsory motor vehicle liability insurance and
25 financial responsibility laws of this state. By September 1, 2021, the commissioner shall propose
26 rules for legislative approval and emergency rules pursuant to §29A-3-1 *et seq.* of this code
27 allowing driver education instructors providing instruction pursuant to §18-6-1 *et seq.* of this code,
28 to administer a knowledge test developed by the division. Notwithstanding §18-8-11 of this code,
29 any person successfully completing a test administered by a driver's education instructor pursuant
30 to the rule is exempt from the proof of school enrollment requirements in that code section.

31 (c) The commissioner shall enter into a reciprocity agreement for driver licenses with the
32 Republic of Ireland.

33 (d) After successful completion of the examination required by this section, §17B-2-3 or
34 §17B-2-7b of this code, and prior to the issuance of a license pursuant to §17B-2-8 of this code,
35 every applicant for a driver's license, graduated driver's license, or motorcycle-only license shall
36 attend a mandatory education class on the dangers and social consequences of driving a motor
37 vehicle while under the influence of alcohol. To the extent practicable, the commissioner shall use
38 as lecturers at those classes persons who can relate first-hand experiences as victims or family
39 members of victims of alcohol-related accidents or drivers who have been involved in alcohol-
40 related accidents which caused serious bodily injury or death.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to create a reciprocity agreement with the Republic of Ireland for driver licenses.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.