

Subject Misdemeanor traffic violations
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Overview

This bill makes it a misdemeanor if a vehicle operator violates traffic or motor vehicle regulations and causes great bodily harm or death (unless another penalty is established). A court hearing is also mandated. It is effective August 1, 2019, for acts committed on or after that date.

Under current law, there is a default petty misdemeanor penalty in the chapter of statutes governing traffic regulations, motor vehicle equipment, and vehicle size and weight limits. Various prohibitions in the chapter carry a higher penalty, including on careless driving.

Background. “Great bodily harm” is defined in the criminal code, and it includes bodily injury that (1) creates a high chance of death, (2) causes serious disfigurement, or (3) causes permanent or protracted impairment of a part of the body. A misdemeanor penalty is punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000, imprisonment for up to 90 days, or both.