



# Judicial Impact Statement

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## SB 217 – SORN license plate

SB 217

Sen. Schaffer

### Title Information

To enact sections 2950.18 and 4503.237 of the Revised Code to create a SORN Law license plate and to require all Tier II and Tier III sex offender and child-victim offenders to display such license plates when operating a vehicle in this state.

### Background

The bill requires all Tier II and III sex offender and child-victim offenders to display a fluorescent green license plate or window decal (if the vehicle is registered in a state that is not Ohio). Upon sentencing, the trial court must issue an order preventing such offenders from operating a vehicle without displaying either the license plate or the decal (failure to do so would be a minor misdemeanor).

The requirement also applies to offenders who had already been sentenced prior to the bill's effective date. Courts must issue the order "as soon as is practicable after that date."

### Judicial Impact

The requirement that courts issue orders for offenders already sentenced could have a huge impact on court staff and workload. Court staff would have to go through all closed cases to find previously sentenced offenders who fall under the bill's criteria, and *sua sponte* issue orders pertaining to the license plate requirement. Further, those offenders would likely need to appear personally before the judge when the order is to be issued, negatively impacting court caseload. For offenders still incarcerated, this could result in significant transportation costs imposed upon local governments and counties. If the sponsor's primary concern is public safety, this burden is not outweighed by a public-safety benefit because special license plates are not needed by law enforcement, who already have the technological capabilities to read license plates and identify offenders.

What is a Judicial Impact Statement?

A Judicial Impact Statement describes as objectively and accurately as possible the probable, practical effects on Ohio's court system of the adoption of the particular bill. The court system includes people who use the courts (parties to suits, witnesses, attorneys and other deputies, probation officials, judges and others). The Ohio Judicial Conference prepares these statements pursuant to R.C. 105.911.

Additionally, and more generally, judges are not supportive of bills that create registries, databases, or other tools that publicize past criminal conduct. While S.B. 217 does not create a registry or database, the Judicial Conference's [Policy Statement on Criminal Registries and Databases](#) outlines our position on such measures, particularly as it pertains to the efficacy of offense-based classifications and requirements. Additionally, judges predict that a SORN license plate or decal could lead to an increase in road-rage or vehicular-vandalism incidents.

### Conclusion

The Judicial Conference is concerned that S.B. 217, with its requirement that courts issue orders pertaining to already-sentenced offenders would have a significant negative impact on courts and local governments. This provision should be removed from the bill.