

**House File 2161 - Introduced**

HOUSE FILE 2161

BY FRY

**A BILL FOR**

1 An Act relating to the operation of motor vehicles in the  
2 left-most lane of certain roadways, and making penalties  
3 applicable.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. Section 321.233, Code 2024, is amended to read  
2 as follows:

3 **321.233 Road workers exempted.**

4 This chapter, except sections 321.277 and 321.280, does  
5 not apply to persons and motor vehicles and other equipment  
6 while actually engaged in work upon the surface of a highway  
7 officially closed to traffic but does apply to such persons  
8 and vehicles when traveling to or from such work. The minimum  
9 speed restriction of section 321.285, subsection 5, and the  
10 provisions of sections 321.297, and 321.298, section 321.299,  
11 subsection 3, and section 321.323 do not apply to road workers  
12 operating maintenance equipment on behalf of any state or local  
13 authority while engaged in road maintenance, road blading, snow  
14 and ice control and removal, and granular resurfacing work on a  
15 highway, whether or not the highway is closed to traffic.

16 Sec. 2. Section 321.299, Code 2024, is amended by adding the  
17 following new subsection:

18 NEW SUBSECTION. 3. *a.* Notwithstanding the exception  
19 in subsection 2, a person operating a motor vehicle in the  
20 left-most lane of a roadway who knows or reasonably should  
21 know that another vehicle will be overtaking the person's  
22 vehicle from the rear shall not continue to operate the  
23 vehicle in the left-most lane and shall make a lane change  
24 into the lane to the immediate right of the left-most lane.  
25 This subsection applies to persons operating motor vehicles  
26 on roadways having two or more lanes designated for traffic  
27 traveling in one direction and two or more lanes designated for  
28 traffic traveling in the opposite direction. For purposes of  
29 this subsection, "left-most lane" means the lane of a roadway  
30 designated for traffic traveling in any one direction that is  
31 farthest to the left, and does not include any lane designated  
32 for traffic traveling in the opposite direction.

33 *b.* This subsection does not apply under any of the following  
34 circumstances:

35 (1) When the person is overtaking or passing another vehicle

1 operating in the lane to the immediate right of the left-most  
2 lane.

3 (2) When traffic conditions, inclement weather,  
4 obstructions, or hazards make it necessary to operate the  
5 vehicle in the left-most lane.

6 (3) When a law, regulation, ordinance, official  
7 traffic-control device, or direction from a peace officer  
8 requires the person to operate the vehicle in the left-most  
9 lane.

10 (4) When the person is exiting the roadway or turning to the  
11 left in compliance with this chapter.

12 (5) When the person is operating an authorized emergency  
13 vehicle in the course of the person's duties.

14 EXPLANATION

15 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with  
16 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

17 Under current law, Code section 321.297 requires a vehicle  
18 proceeding at less than the normal speed of traffic at the time  
19 and place and under the conditions then existing to be driven  
20 in the right-hand lane then available for traffic upon all  
21 roadways, or as close as practicable to the right-hand curb or  
22 edge of the roadway, except when overtaking and passing another  
23 vehicle proceeding in the same direction or when preparing  
24 for a left turn. Code section 321.299 requires the driver of  
25 a vehicle being overtaken by another vehicle proceeding in  
26 the same direction to give way to the right in favor of the  
27 overtaking vehicle and prohibits the driver from increasing  
28 the speed of the overtaken vehicle until completely passed by  
29 the overtaking vehicle. This provision does not apply when  
30 overtaking and passing on the right is permitted. Code section  
31 321.302 authorizes overtaking and passing on the right on  
32 roadways of sufficient width for two or more lines of traffic  
33 moving in the same direction when the overtaken vehicle is  
34 making or about to make a left turn. Code section 321.302 also  
35 authorizes overtaking and passing on the right on roadways of

1 sufficient width for four or more lines of moving traffic.

2 This bill prohibits a person operating a motor vehicle in  
3 the left-most lane of a roadway, who knows or reasonably should  
4 know that another vehicle will be overtaking the person's  
5 vehicle from the rear, from continuing to operate the vehicle  
6 in the left-most lane and requires the person to make a lane  
7 change into the lane to the immediate right of the left-most  
8 lane. The exception to Code section 321.299(2), allowing the  
9 driver of an overtaken vehicle to fail to give way to the  
10 right in favor of the overtaking vehicle when overtaking and  
11 passing on the right is permitted, is not applicable to the  
12 provisions of the bill. The bill applies to persons operating  
13 motor vehicles on roadways having two or more lanes designated  
14 for traffic traveling in one direction and two or more lanes  
15 designated for traffic traveling in the opposite direction.  
16 For purposes of the bill, "left-most lane" means the lane of a  
17 roadway designated for traffic traveling in any one direction  
18 that is farthest to the left, and does not include any lane  
19 designated for traffic traveling in the opposite direction.

20 The bill exempts persons from the requirements of the bill  
21 under certain circumstances, including when the person is  
22 overtaking or passing another vehicle operating in the lane  
23 to the immediate right of the left-most lane; when traffic  
24 conditions, inclement weather, obstructions, or hazards make  
25 it necessary to operate the vehicle in the left-most lane;  
26 when a law, regulation, ordinance, official traffic-control  
27 device, or direction from a peace officer requires the person  
28 to operate the vehicle in the left-most lane; when the person  
29 is exiting the roadway or turning to the left; when the person  
30 is operating an authorized emergency vehicle in the course  
31 of the person's duties; and when road workers are operating  
32 maintenance equipment on behalf of any state or local authority  
33 while engaged in road maintenance, road blading, snow and  
34 ice control and removal, and granular resurfacing work on a  
35 highway.

H.F. 2161

1 By operation of law, a violation of the bill is punishable  
2 by a scheduled fine of \$135. The violation is also subject  
3 to additional penalties under Code section 321.482A if the  
4 violation causes serious injury or death. For a violation  
5 causing serious injury, the additional penalties include a fine  
6 of \$500 or suspension of the violator's driver's license and  
7 operating privileges for not more than 90 days, or both. For  
8 a violation causing death, the additional penalties include a  
9 fine of \$1,000 or suspension of the violator's driver's license  
10 or operating privileges for not more than 180 days, or both.