HOUSE SUMMARY OF SENATE AMENDMENTS

House Bill No. 361 by Representative Roy

TRAFFIC/ACCIDENTS: Revises provisions relative to access to accident reports

Synopsis of Senate Amendments

1. Changed the definition of "news-gathering organization" to include newspapers, wire service, and printed or electronic news publications.

Digest of Bill as Finally Passed by Senate

Present law requires state police, any local police department, or any sheriff's office to provide copies of crash reports to any interested person upon request. Authorizes these agencies to charge a fee not to exceed the sum of $5 per report which does not exceed two pages and $7.50 per report which exceeds two pages.

Present law provides that the information contained in the accident reports shall be confidential, exempt from the provisions of the public records laws, and shall be made available only to parties of the accident; insurers of any party subject to the report; the succession representatives; or to a news-gathering organization that requests documents related to the accident. Present law further provides that the report shall be made available to these persons within seven working days following completion of the accident investigation.

Proposed law retains present law and defines "news-gathering organization" as any of the following:

(1) A newspaper, wire service, or news publication, printed or electronic, of current news and intelligence of varied, broad, and general public interest, having been published for a minimum of one year and that can provide documentation of membership in a statewide or national press association, as represented by an employee thereof who can provide documentation of his employment with the newspaper, wire service, or news publication. Members of news-gathering organizations are exempt from any prohibition on screening accident reports.

(2) A radio broadcast station, television broadcast station, cable television operator, or wire service as represented by an employee thereof who can provide documentation of his employment.

(Amends R.S. 32:398(K)(1)(a))