

From The House

Dear Neighbors:

From time to time I log onto the Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles website to check the wait times(<https://www.dmvselfservice.ct.gov/NemoService.aspx>). Our closest full-service office is the old dinosaur in Wethersfield. Lines for a "change of registration" regularly stretch beyond two hours. That is two-plus hours out of your work day for what should be a simple transaction. Two-plus hours that you could be with family or friends. It is frustrating and unnecessary.

DMV upgraded its software over the summer in an effort to improve customer experiences and allow more online transactions. So far, that move has backfired. Lines are longer now than they were before the upgrade.

So how do we change this story and create a state agency that is truly customer-focused? A place where - even if your experience isn't pleasant - your experience is quick? An agency where online transactions are secure and efficient? A modern government agency?

Acting DMV Commissioner Dennis Murphy hopes he has the answers. Commissioner Murphy appeared before the General Assembly's Transportation Committee in February to face the music and discuss ideas and solutions. He admitted there is much work to be done before the new computer system is working at 100 percent. He also admitted the transition has been (very) bumpy. Commissioner Murphy did report a silver lining - more people appear to be using DMV's online services (CT.gov/DMV), which could help reduce wait times. From September to January online transactions have steadily grown. In September, 56 percent of transactions that could be done online actually were. That percentage increased to 68 percent this January.

Another potential strategy, recently floated by Governor Malloy, would allow third-party companies like Triple A to provide more DMV services. They already do driver's license renewals with generally positive reviews. What if we allowed Triple A to handle registrations or conduct driver's tests? It's an interesting question that I think we should explore. Wouldn't it be nice to drive just down Farmington Avenue to Triple A to take your driving test. For many of us, DMV is the face of state government. It is the agency we all use and all seem to have a story about. Going to DMV shouldn't be a chore. Reducing wait times at the DMV is a legislative priority this year - it's been in the headlines and part of the water cooler conversations - so I expect we will continue to see progress. There is a bill (HB 5055) before the Transportation Committee that will likely wind its way through the legislative process that will incorporate all or some of these ideas.

I will keep you informed as the legislative session progresses.