

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 868

BY REPRESENTATIVE DEWITT

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 32:341(C), (D), and (G), 384(A) and (D), and 385(A)(1)(a) and
3 to enact R.S. 32:384(E)(3) and (F) and 385(A)(4), relative to the regulation of motor
4 vehicles; to establish comprehensive requirements for brake equipment; to mandate
5 safety chain specifications for trailers and semitrailers; to eliminate specific
6 exemptions pertaining to farm equipment; to provide for an exception applicable to
7 the operation of certain vehicles on private property; and to provide for related
8 matters.

9 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

10 Section 1. R.S. 32:341(C), (D), and (G), 384(A) and (D), and 385(A)(1)(a) are
11 hereby amended and reenacted and R.S. 32:384(E)(3) and (F) and 385(A)(4) are hereby
12 enacted to read as follows:

13 §341. Brake equipment required

14 * * *

15 C. Every trailer or ~~semi-trailer~~ of semitrailer used in commerce or that was
16 originally manufactured with brakes and has a gross weight of 3,000 three thousand
17 pounds or more, when operated upon a highway of this state, shall be equipped with
18 brakes adequate to control the movement of and to stop and hold such vehicle and
19 so designed as to be applied shall be designed so that the brakes may be applied by
20 the driver of the towing motor vehicle from its cab, and ~~said~~ the brakes shall be so
21 designed and connected that in case of an accidental breakaway of the towed vehicle
22 the brakes shall be automatically applied. A semitrailer, pole trailer, full trailer, or
23 four-wheel pole trailer with gross weight of three thousand pounds or less shall not
24 be mandated to be equipped with braking systems, provided that the sum of the gross

1 axle weight of the towed vehicle does not exceed forty percent of the sum of the
2 gross axle weight of the towing vehicle.

3 D. Every motor vehicle, trailer or ~~semi-trailer~~ semitrailer manufactured or
4 assembled after December 31, 1962, and thereafter sold in this state and operated
5 upon the highways of this state shall be equipped with brakes upon all wheels of
6 every such vehicle, if it was originally manufactured with brakes, except that no
7 motorcycle, motor-driven cycle, or ~~semi-trailer~~ semitrailer of less than 1,500 three
8 thousand pounds gross weight, need be equipped with brakes.

9 * * *

10 G. All sport, boat, or any other nonagricultural trailers and ~~semi-trailers of~~
11 ~~less than 3000 pounds gross weight~~ semitrailers not used in commerce between six
12 thousand and seven thousand pounds need not be equipped with brakes.

13 * * *

14 §384. Trailers and towed vehicles

15 A. The drawbar or connection between two vehicles or implements of
16 husbandry, when one is towing the other, shall be of sufficient strength to pull all
17 weight towed thereby and shall not exceed fifteen feet from one vehicle to the other,
18 except that the drawbar or connection may exceed fifteen feet between any two
19 vehicles transporting poles, pipes, machinery, or other objects of a structural nature
20 which cannot be readily dismembered. The drawbar or connection shall be securely
21 affixed in strict compliance with the manufacturer's specifications. This includes the
22 installation of all required pins, clips, or locking mechanisms, thereby ensuring the
23 prevention of any unintentional uncoupling while in operation.

24 * * *

25 D. Every trailer and semitrailer originally manufactured with safety chains
26 or other safety devices ~~with a loaded gross weight capacity of up to six thousand~~
27 ~~pounds~~ shall be equipped with safety chains or other safety ~~device~~ devices approved
28 in accordance with Subsection E of this Section. The safety chains or other approved
29 safety ~~device~~ devices shall be securely attached to the towing vehicle when the trailer
30 or semitrailer is in motion and shall be of sufficient strength to hold the trailer behind

1 the towing vehicle in case the connection between the two vehicles detaches. The
2 provisions contained in this Section shall not apply to fifth-wheel devices mounted
3 on truck tractors or comparable towing vehicles, including convertor dollies, that
4 interface and connect with the upper coupler assembly of a semitrailer.

5 E.

6 * * *

7 (3) Safety chains and other safety devices mandated by Subsection D of this
8 Section shall conform to manufacturer specifications or applicable federal motor
9 vehicle safety standards. These devices shall be deemed sufficient to ensure the
10 secure connection between the towing vehicle and the trailer or semitrailer in the
11 event of a failure of the primary coupling device.

12 F. The provisions contained in Subsections D and E of this Section,
13 regarding safety chains or approved safety devices, shall not apply to any trailer,
14 semitrailer, or vehicle while being operated exclusively on private property, or solely
15 for the crossing of a public roadway by a trailer, semitrailer, or implement of
16 husbandry between contiguous parcels of land owned or leased by the same person.

17 §385. Farm vehicles and equipment; exemptions

18 A.(1)(a) Farm and agricultural vehicles and equipment, except draglines and
19 bulldozers, being operated or transported for bona fide agricultural purposes or the
20 transportation of farm vehicles and equipment to be used for normal farm purposes
21 by persons transporting such farm equipment or machinery, for distances not to
22 exceed fifty miles from the point of origin, and fertilizer tending units shall be
23 exempt from the requirements of R.S. 32:380 through 382 and, additionally, farm
24 equipment shall be exempt from the requirements of ~~R.S. 32:384~~ R.S. 32:384(B),
25 (C), and (E)(1) and (2).

26 * * *

27 (4) Trailers, semitrailers, and any implements of husbandry used in
28 connection with farm and agricultural vehicles and equipment shall comply with the
29 towing safety requirements of R.S. 32:384(A), (D), and (E)(3). The drawbar or other
30 primary connection between a towing vehicle and a trailer or semitrailer shall be

