

Bill adding third gender choice for licenses, IDs nears passage

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By Brian Dowling - Friday, June 29, 2018

A bill directing the Registry of Motor Vehicles to let people choose “X” for a gender instead of male or female passed the Senate nearly unanimously and could bring the change to state-issued IDs as soon as November.

The option — already available in Oregon, California, Maine and Washington, D.C. — addresses concerns by people who don’t identify as solely male or female and consider themselves non-binary, meaning neither one nor the other gender.

While the bill flew through the Senate and headed to the House, the RMV said it is already in the process of adding the third gender option.

“The Registry of Motor Vehicles’ new ATLAS system will be able to offer customers the option of selecting a ‘non-binary’ marker and the Registry will phase in the new marker after the initial rollout when the system is fully implemented,” MassDOT spokeswoman Jacquelyn Goddard said in a statement.

A spokeswoman said Gov. Charlie Baker will review the bill if it makes it to his desk.

The bill’s sponsor, state Sen. Karen Spilka, said she filed the measure after a constituent wrote about the stress of having to choose a gender for a driver’s license.

“What struck me as I remember when my kids went for their licenses, it was a joyous occasion; it was milestone. It should not be something that causes stress or conflict,” Spilka said.

Andrew Beckwith, president of the Massachusetts Family Institute said, “Driver’s licenses and other forms of ID are legal documents intended to reflect objective facts, like height, date of birth, current address and sex. I’m sure there are plenty of people who would rather not have their true height or age listed on their license, but that’s irrelevant.”

Scott Lively, who’s running against Baker in the Republican gubernatorial primary, said the bill was an example of officials “capitulating” to the left.

“Government officials who indulge this are guilty of malfeasance,” Lively said of the bill.