March 23, 1903

*This Date in Missouri Senate History*

On *This Date in Missouri Senate History*, the date was March 23, 1903, the day the Legislature passed a measure requiring licensing vehicles.

Senate Bill 43 required automobile owners to pay $2 per year to either the city or county license commissioner, if one existed, for an operator’s license.

In addition, owners were required to make their own license plate and put three-inch tall numbers on both headlights.

The law took effect on June 23.

Ironically, a court decision backed bill language that required a license from every city and/or county in which someone would drive, rather than a single license that would be recognized in all Missouri cities and counties.

This would change with House Bill 251, which would become law in 1907. It asked for a one-time, $5 fee for registration that would be recognized throughout Missouri.

But, it all started on March 23, 1903, the date marking final passage of Senate Bill 43 — one of the nation’s first vehicle licensing laws — on *This Date in Missouri Senate History*.

(Source: *Missouri Senate Journal*)