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RELEASE: Immediate

The following is the text of Governor George Deukmejian's weekly radio address focusing on the disclosure of drivers' license information:

"On July 18th, a promising young actress named Rebecca Schaeffer was murdered. Later, authorities revealed that the prime suspect in the case had been able to obtain Miss Schaeffer's home address through information that is available to the public from the Department of Motor Vehicles.

"The DMV collects and maintains important personal information -- including home addresses and driving records -- on all Californians who have drivers' licenses, identification cards and registered vehicles.

"There are a number of legitimate reasons for making this information available. Automobile manufacturers need to get current addresses to notify car owners about recall programs involving unsafe vehicles. Insurance companies need to obtain an individual's driving record before issuing car insurance. The records are also useful to lawyers, creditors and other commercial requestors who are trying to locate an individual for proper business reasons.

"But while the vast majority of requests are for legitimate, lawful purposes, there is a growing concern that this information is also easily available to those who have violent or illegal intentions, such as the suspect in the Rebecca Schaeffer case.

"In response to these concerns, I have directed the Department of Motor Vehicles to take steps to restrict the release of information and ensure that the public's safety and right to privacy is protected to the fullest extent possible.

"Effective October 1, all commercial requestors of information will be required to register with the DMV and enter into new agreements that specify and restrict how the address information may be used. The DMV will also establish a 10 day waiting period before issuing a person's home address to other individual requestors. During this waiting period, the department would notify the individual that a request has been made for his

or her personal information, along with the name of the person or company who made this request, and the reason for their request.

"In addition to these immediate steps, our administration will also be working with the Legislature to develop a plan that would make it harder to obtain private home addresses or other personal information from the DMV. Our goal should be to limit access to this information to requesters who have legitimate business purposes.

"By taking these steps, we can provide an additional measure of protection for our citizens, while at the same time keeping information available to those entities which truly have a compelling need for the information.

"Please join me next week for another California Report. This is Governor George Deukmejian. Thanks for listening."

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(Cont)

#### 'Legitimate Reasons'

Among the "legitimate reasons" for obtaining DMV personal information, the governor listed automobile manufacturers who need home addresses to notify car owners about recall programs involving unsafe vehicles, insurance companies who need an individual's driving record before issuing a policy, and lawyers and creditors who are trying to find an individual for proper business reasons.

Details for implementing the directive are still being worked out, Brett said. In general, however, business firms that have day-to-day business contact with the DMV would continue to get the requested information immediately. But firms and individuals who do not have this kind of regular activity would be subject to the 10-day waiting period, Brett said.

In addition to issuing his directive, Deukmejian indicated he also

is willing to work with the Legislature to develop a plan to make it even harder to obtain private home addresses or other personal information from the DMV.

"Our goal should be to limit access to this information to requesters who have legitimate business purposes," he said.

"By taking these steps, we can provide an additional measure of protection for our citizens, while at the same time keeping information available to those entities which truly have a compelling need for the information."

Assembly Speaker Pro Tem Mike Roos (D-Los Angeles) is the author of a bill that would allow any citizen to request that his or her home address not be released by the DMV.

An alternative address, such as a person's place of employment or a post office box that would accept and forward mail to the individual, would be provided instead.

Roos' bill is scheduled to be heard by the Senate Judiciary Committee on Tuesday. Brett said the governor has "no position" on the legislation at this time. It is supported by the California section of the Screen Actors Guild national board of directors.

"Individuals, whether they are movie stars, professional sports figures, corporate executives or average citizens," Roos said, "should not have to contend with government records being used by deranged individuals to harass them or stall them down like hunted prey."

## STATE AND REGIONAL NEWS

OC Reg 8-27-89

# Deukmejian orders new limits on access to drivers' records

McClatchy News Service

SACRAMENTO — Gov. George Deukmejian said Saturday that he has directed the state Department of Motor Vehicles to restrict the release of public information about California drivers.

Deukmejian said his action was prompted by the July 18 slaying of actress Rebecca Schaeffer, who police say was killed after the prime suspect in the case hired an investigator to obtain her home address from DMV records.

"While the vast majority of requests are for legitimate, lawful purposes, there is a growing concern that this information is also easily available to those who have violent or illegal intentions," Deukmejian said in a radio address.

"In response to these concerns, I have directed the Department of Motor Vehicles to take steps to restrict the release of information and ensure that the public's safety and right to privacy is protected to the fullest extent possible."

The DMV regularly provides in-

formation about drivers to those who pay a fee and fill out a form offering a legitimate reason for their request.

Los Angeles police officials have said Schaeffer, who appeared in the television series "My Sister Sam," was killed after suspect Robert John Bardo located her through an Arizona private investigation agency. The agency obtained her address from the DMV.

The department received requests for 41 million records last fiscal year, largely from insurance companies, lawyers, creditors, car manufacturers and others with a business interest.

Businesses that frequently request DMV information are required to register with the department and sign agreements stating why they need the information and restricting how it may be used. Beginning Oct. 1, those businesses must re-register.

The DMV also will impose a 10-day waiting period for individuals and many businesses requesting information. An exception will be made for some businesses, includ-

ing insurance companies and car manufacturers, that buy the information in bulk and have "an automotive interest" in obtaining it, DMV spokesman Bill Gengler said.

Under current DMV procedures, drivers are notified by mail when an individual makes an over-the-counter request for information about them.

"The individual making the request under the new policy would not receive the information for 10 days," Deukmejian press secretary Kevin Brett said. "The party whose address is being requested would be notified in the interim."

Because drivers' records — including information on citations and accidents — are public documents, the DMV is compelled to release them in most cases. In the case of addresses, current law protects only those of judges, peace officers and people who can prove their well-being is in jeopardy.

Assembly Speaker Pro Tem Mike Roos has proposed legislation that would let drivers request that their home addresses be kept confidential.

# Governor tells DMV to limit access to data, cites actress' murder

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Deukmejian, citing the murder of actress Rebecca Schaeffer, said yesterday he is making it harder for firms and individuals to get home addresses through driver's license records.

"In response to these concerns, I have directed the Department of Motor Vehicles to take steps to restrict the release of information and ensure that the public's safety and right to privacy is protected to the fullest extent possible," the Republican governor said in his weekly radio address.

Beginning Oct. 1, commercial firms that regularly seek information will have to register with the DMV and sign agreements specifying how they use the address information, he said. When individuals seek home addresses, there will be a 10-day waiting period, while the DMV notifies the person whose address is being sought and tells that person who is seeking it and why.

Deukmejian said he will be working with the Legislature "to develop a plan that would make it harder to obtain private home addresses or other personal information from the DMV. Our goal should be to limit access to this information to requesters who have legitimate business purposes."

Deukmejian's speech did not mention access to DMV records by the news media, but spokesmen for two media groups said they were told by the administration that there would be an exemption for reporting purposes.

The DMV maintains records on all Californians who have drivers' licenses, identification cards and registered vehicles. This information is generally open to the public, although the DMV charges a fee.

"While the vast majority of requests are for legitimate, lawful purposes, there is a growing concern that this information is also easily available to those who have violent or illegal intentions, such as the sus-

pect in the Rebecca Schaeffer case," he said.

Schaeffer, who was in the "My Sister Sam" television series, was murdered July 18. Robert John Bardo is in Los Angeles County Jail, charged with her murder.

"Later, authorities revealed that the prime suspect in the case had been able to obtain Miss Schaeffer's home address through information that is available to the public from the Department of Motor Vehicles," Deukmejian said.

Right after the murder, Assemblyman Mike Rook, D-Los Angeles, introduced a bill that would prohibit home addresses from being released in otherwise public records.

"We did not hear any reference to a press exemption. However, I am assured one does exist," said Mike Dorais, lobbyist for the California Newspaper Publishers Association. "In that context, the governor's action is well-reasoned, from our standpoint as news gatherers and news disseminators."

"I think the governor has established minimal safeguards consistent with a free society and access to government information," Dorais said.

Daniel C. Carson, president of the Central California Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists, said he was also told there would be a media exemption.

"Generally, we think it's a losing game to try to seal public records to hide home addresses," he said, adding there are too many places for determined people to find addresses.

"If you embark on this effort to give people a false sense of security by sealing records all over the place, all you really do is create a closed society," Carson is a staff writer for *The San Diego Union*.

Mel Opatowsky, president of the California First Amendment Coalition and managing editor of *The Press-Enterprise* in Riverside, said the governor was misconstruing the public records law by requiring individuals and firms to give reasons and wait 10 days.

## DMV to Stiffen Rules on Release of Addresses

By JERRY GILLAM, I-1  
Times Staff Writer

SACRAMENTO—Reacting to the recent murder of actress Rebecca Schaeffer, Gov. George Deukmejian on Saturday ordered the Department of Motor Vehicles to restrict the public release of home addresses in order to protect motorists from possible harm or harassment.

In his regular weekly radio speech, the governor noted that law enforcement authorities have said the prime suspect in the Schaeffer murder case in Los Angeles was able to obtain her home address through driver's license information available to the public for a nominal fee.

The suspect, Robert John Bardo, 18, is in Los Angeles County Jail, awaiting trial. Investigators said he got Schaeffer's home address from a Tucson, Ariz., private investigation firm, who got it from someone who checked DMV public records. Bardo allegedly told the firm that Schaeffer was an old friend and he wanted to send her a gift.

Schaeffer was killed by an assailant July 18, when she answered the door to her apartment in the Fairfax District.

Deukmejian said that effective Oct. 1, all commercial organizations requesting personal information from the DMV will be required to register with the department and adhere to detailed new agreements on how the data will be used.

In addition, the governor said the DMV will establish a 10-day waiting period before issuing a person's home address to individuals requesting information.

During this waiting period, the department will notify the person that a request has been made for his or her personal information. The person will receive the name of the company or individual who made the request and the reason for it.

"The information will still be delivered," said Kevin Brett, the governor's press secretary, "but there will be a warning issued to the individual."

While the vast majority of DMV personal information requests are for "legitimate, lawful purposes," Deukmejian said, "there is growing concern that this information is also easily available to those who have violent or illegal intentions, such as the suspect in the Rebecca Schaeffer case."

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