

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6415

As Passed Senate, February 14, 2006

Title: An act relating to the appointment of interpreters for driver's license examinations.

Brief Description: Allowing interpreters to assist hearing impaired persons during driver's license examinations.

Sponsors: Senators Pridemore, McAuliffe, Mulliken and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/2/06 [DP].

Passed Senate: 2/14/06, 47-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Jacobsen, Vice Chair; Poulsen, Vice Chair; Benson, Ranking Minority Member; Benton, Berkey, Eide, Esser, Finkbeiner, Kastama, Mulliken, Oke, Sheldon, Spanel and Weinstein.

Staff: Janice Baumgardt (786-7319)

Background: There are two tests involved in obtaining a driver's license: a knowledge exam and a skills exam. The Department of Licensing (DOL) may adopt rules relating to driver testing procedures. DOL policy, during the knowledge exam, is to hire a deaf interpreter for those applicants who think they would benefit from it. The interpreter may only assist the applicant in understanding the exam questions and choice of answers. Family members or friends may not be used as the interpreter. In the skills exam, DOL policy is to set aside additional time for the exam and to meet with the applicant before the exam to discuss preferred modes of communication. An interpreter is not allowed in the car during the skill exam.

Summary of Bill: DOL is directed to allow deaf interpreters in the car during the skills exam. The interpreter may be of the applicant's choosing and must be at the applicant's cost.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Testing for a driver's license is a stressful situation and being deaf without an interpreter in this situation can turn it into an embarrassing and humiliating experience as well. This bill will give respect and understanding to the deaf community.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Senator Pridemore, prime sponsor; Ashli-Marie Grant, Tami Grant, citizens.

House Amendment: The language requiring the applicant to pay for the interpreter is removed. Language allowing applicant to choose the interpreter is narrowed so that the interpreter must be from a list provided by the DOL.