

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1172

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to student pedestrian safety.

Brief Description: Creating the school pathway and bus stop improvement program.

Sponsor(s): By House Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Holland, Cole, Peery, Brumsickle, G. Fisher, Valle, Brough, Phillips, Rasmussen, Jones, Dorn, P. Johnson, Jacobsen, Winsley, R. King, Pruitt, H. Myers, Ogden, Wood, Vance, Sheldon, Day, Spanel, Leonard, Paris, Rust, Scott, Haugen, Mitchell, Hine, Cantwell, Wynne, Nealey, Miller, Bowman, Moyer, Fraser, O'Brien, Sprenkle, Orr and Tate; by request of Task Force on Student Transportation Safety).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Education, February 14, 1991, DPS;
Transportation, March 8, 1991, DPS(ED)-A;
Passed House, March 18, 1991, 96-0;
Amended by Senate;
Passed Legislature, 94-0.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1172 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.*
Signed by 18 members: Representatives Peery, Chair;
G. Fisher, Vice Chair; Brough, Ranking Minority Member;
Vance, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Betrozoff;
Broback; Brumsickle; Dorn; Holland; P. Johnson; Jones;
Neher; Orr; Phillips; Rasmussen; Roland; H. Sommers; and
Valle.

Staff: Robert Butts (786-7111).

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION**

Majority Report: *The substitute bill by Committee on Education be substituted therefor and the substitute bill as amended by Committee on Transportation do pass.* Signed by

27 members: Representatives R. Fisher, Chair; R. Meyers, Vice Chair; Betrozoff, Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Basich; Brough; Cantwell; Cooper; Day; G. Fisher; Forner; Haugen; Heavey; Horn; P. Johnson; R. Johnson; Jones; Kremen; Mitchell; Nelson; Orr; Prentice; Prince; Schmidt; Wilson; Wood; and Zellinsky.

Staff: David Williams (786-7305).

Background: The Task Force on Student Transportation Safety was established in 1989 (ESHB 2066) to develop recommendations for reducing the dangers children face as they travel to and from school. Three of the task force's recommendations included the establishment of a school pathway and bus stop improvement program; clarifying that local developer impact fees may be used for sidewalks, pathways, and school bus stops; and clarifying that school bus stops are required in new subdivisions.

Many children in the State must walk to school on busy streets without sidewalks or adequate shoulders. In addition, children riding school buses are often loaded and unloaded in hazardous locations. These risks are especially high in regions of the State experiencing rapid residential growth. Local jurisdictions have programs to fund sidewalks, paths and trails, but the task force found these programs to be inadequate to meet identified needs.

The State pays the costs of transporting students who live more than one-mile radius of their school. In addition, it pays for transporting children who live within one-mile if: 1) walking to school is determined to be hazardous due to inadequate sidewalks and pathways; and 2) it is demonstrated by the school district that good faith efforts are being made to alleviate the problem. In the 1990-91 school year, \$13.8 million from the general fund was paid to districts by the State for transporting children because of hazardous walking condition determinations.

Summary of Bill: The School Pathway and Bus Stop Improvement Program is created. The purpose of the program is to establish a council to make recommendations about roads, streets, and bus stops that the council considers inadequate for school children as they travel to school, and develop a program for making safety improvements.

The council shall include four legislators and representatives from the Department of Transportation, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, school district administrators, school board members, counties, cities, the Traffic Safety Commission, school bus drivers, and parents.

The council shall:

- (a) formulate criteria for identifying roads and school bus stops that the council considers inadequate for elementary school students and establish recommendations for standards for making safety improvements;
- (b) based on these criteria, inventory roads within a one-mile radius of elementary schools and school bus stops considered inadequate by the council, and recommend priority safety improvement projects;
- (c) develop a plan by which the recommended priority safety improvement projects may be implemented, and make the plan available to applicable local jurisdictions;
- (d) formulate recommended guidelines for student pedestrian safety within a one-mile radius of new elementary schools; and
- (e) estimate the cost of implementing state-wide sidewalk crossing rules.

The council shall submit its recommendations and findings to the Legislature, governor, local governments, school districts, and other appropriate agencies and organizations by June 30, 1993.

If the bill is not included in the budget, it will be null and void. Authority for the council expires on June 30, 1996.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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

Testimony For: (Education): The lack of safe walkways near our schools is a problem that needs to be addressed.

(Transportation): None.

Testimony Against: (Education): We do not need a statewide panel to address this problem: it is best left to local governments.

(Transportation): None.

Witnesses: (Education): Gary H. Tollefsen, Washington State PTA (in favor); Mike Echelbarger, Master Builders of King and Snohomish County (opposed); and Jim Justin, Association of Washington Cities (in favor).

(Transportation): None.