

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SHB 1503**

**AS OF MARCH 27, 1991**

**Brief Description:** Providing for enforcement of safety belt requirements.

**SPONSORS:** House Committee on Judiciary (originally sponsored by Representative Appelwick).

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION**

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION**

**Staff:** Brian McMorrow (786-7304)

**Hearing Dates:** April 2, 1991

**BACKGROUND:**

Every person over age 16 operating a motor vehicle and every person riding in a motor vehicle must wear a safety belt. Failure to wear a safety belt constitutes a traffic infraction, subject to a monetary penalty, currently at \$25, as set by Supreme Court rule. Law enforcement officers can enforce this law only as a secondary action when a driver has been detained for a suspected motor vehicle violation or other offense.

**SUMMARY:**

The provision limiting enforcement of the safety belt law to secondary action is removed, thus making the failure to wear a safety belt a primary traffic infraction.

Law enforcement officers are prohibited from using the safety belt law as a pretext for harassment. No person may be harassed through enforcement of the safety belt law based on a perception of the person's race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, or disability. A person who is harassed may recover actual damages plus attorney fees and up to \$10,000 in punitive damages.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** none requested