

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5116

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, FEBRUARY 14, 1991

Brief Description: Allowing school bus drivers to report violators.

SPONSORS: Senators Murray, Bailey, Thorsness, Gaspard, A. Smith, Rinehart, Madsen, Talmadge, Bauer and Erwin; by request of Task Force on Student Transp. Safety.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5116 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Bailey, Chairman; Erwin, Vice Chairman; Anderson, Murray, Oke, Pelz, Rinehart, A. Smith, and Talmadge.

Staff: Susan Mosborg (786-7439)

Hearing Dates: January 29, 1991; February 14, 1991

BACKGROUND:

The Task Force on Student Transportation Safety was established in 1989 to develop recommendations for reducing the dangers that children face as they travel to and from school. Among its 11 recommendations is taking measures to reduce violations of school bus stop law.

In some areas of the state, there is a high incidence of vehicles illegally passing school buses. School bus drivers often have difficulty identifying violators when this occurs. Also, school bus drivers have complained that the violations they report are often not pursued by local law enforcement agencies.

SUMMARY:

To improve the prosecution of school bus law violators, law enforcement officers must initiate an investigation of reported school bus law violations within seven days. The investigator may ask the owner of the vehicle involved to identify who was driving the vehicle at the time of the alleged violation. The vehicle owner must identify the driver to the best of his or her ability, but shall not be required to supply information if he or she believes the information is self-incriminating. If the investigating officer is able to identify the driver and has reasonable cause to believe a school bus law violation has occurred, the law enforcement officer must issue a ticket to the driver.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall conduct a pilot program to test the feasibility of using video cameras to identify motorists who illegally pass school buses during loading and unloading. The pilot shall involve at least one school district. Findings shall be reported to the Legislature December 30, 1992.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:

Law enforcement must begin investigating a reported school bus law violation within ten working days rather than seven calendar days. Failure to begin the investigation within ten working days does not limit subsequent investigation or prosecution of the offense.

Appropriation: \$45,000 from the general fund to the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the video camera pilot project.

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

TESTIMONY FOR:

Often, law enforcement does not follow through on bus driver reports of school bus law violations because bus drivers have difficulty accurately identifying the make, model and license number of the vehicle involved. In addition, on some bus routes there are so many violations, bus drivers stop reporting them.

Better enforcement of the school bus law is needed. The use of video cameras has been a successful tool in enforcing Seattle's anti-cruising ordinance.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: FOR: Members, Student Transportation Safety Task Force: Jeff Cook, Northshore School District, Martha Shreve, School Bus Driver, Kennewick School District, Jim Stevenson, Federal Way School District, Mary Weis, Federal Way School Board; Jim Justin, Association of WA Cities; Dwayne Slate, WA State School Directors' Association