

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SB 6481**

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, FEBRUARY 6, 1992**

**Brief Description:** Permitting strobe lights on school buses.

**SPONSORS:** Senators Bailey, Murray, Craswell, Erwin, Oke, Thorsness and Skratek

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

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

**Staff:** Mich'l Prentice Needham (786-7439)

**Hearing Dates:** February 6, 1992

**BACKGROUND:**

Under current law, school buses are required to be equipped with a "stop" signal and front and rear red flashing signal lamps. Current rules of the Washington State Patrol (WSP) also require that school buses be equipped with front and rear amber flashing signal lamps.

WSP rules permit the installation of a single additional hazard strobe lamp. However, the rules require the strobe lamp to be used when children are on the bus and when certain weather, visibility or road conditions exist. The strobe lamp may not be turned on solely because of darkness. There is some evidence to suggest that allowing the strobe lamp to remain on, whenever occupied by children and regardless of road, weather or visibility conditions, does contribute to increased safety of transporting students to and from school.

**SUMMARY:**

School buses may be equipped with a single hazard strobe lamp that meets the standards and specifications of the Washington State Patrol.

The strobe lamp may be used when the bus is occupied with children or when one or more of the following conditions exists:

- o The bus is in motion in inclement, sight-obscuring conditions (e.g., rain, fog, snow, smoke);
- o There is a need to improve the visibility of the bus when stopping on, standing on, or starting onto a highway; or

- o There is limited visibility caused by geographic hazards (e.g., winding roadways, hills, trees, buildings).

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** none requested

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

The strobe lamp will help make buses more visible to traffic and improve the safety of our school children. Drivers should be able to use the strobe lamp whenever children are on board or when they feel conditions are unsafe.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** PRO: Tim Erickson, Washington State Patrol; Gary Gerhard, Monroe School District; George Price, Snohomish School District