

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2414

AS PASSED SENATE, MARCH 1, 1994

Brief Description: Changing provisions relating to child passenger restraint systems.

SPONSORS: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Brown, R. Fisher, Appelwick, J. Kohl, King and Patterson; by request of Washington Traffic Safety Commission)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAW & JUSTICE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators A. Smith, Chairman; Ludwig, Vice Chairman; Niemi, Quigley and Spanel.

Staff: Susan Mahoney (786-7717)

Hearing Dates: February 21, 1994; February 22, 1994

BACKGROUND:

The United States Department of Transportation recommends that children under three years of age be restrained in an approved child restraint seat while riding in a motor vehicle. Some traffic safety guidelines recommend restraint seats until a child reaches four years of age or 40 pounds.

Current Washington law requires children under two years of age be restrained in an approved child restraint seat. The law also requires children between the ages of two and six be restrained in a child restraint seat or with a properly adjusted seat belt. Drivers that do not comply with these requirements may be cited. The Washington Traffic Safety Commission is requesting and recommending the mandatory restraint age for child passengers be raised to increase safety standards.

SUMMARY:

Children under three years of age must be restrained by a restraint system that meets the requirements of the U.S. Department of Transportation and is secured in accordance with the restraint seat manufacturer's instructions.

Children between the ages of three and ten years must be restrained by an approved child restraint seat or with a properly adjusted and fastened safety belt.

The mandatory minimum penalty for traffic citations issued for non-compliance with this section is removed.

The child restraint requirements do not apply to: (1) for-hire vehicles; (2) vehicles operated by auto transportation companies as defined by law, designed to transport 16 or less people; (3) vehicles providing customer shuttle service between parking, convention, and hotel facilities, and airport terminals.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: none requested

TESTIMONY FOR:

Will increase the safety level and protection for child passengers. Many injuries are suffered by children in motor vehicle accidents each year. Child restraint seats dramatically reduce injuries. Raising the age requirements brings Washington law more in line with recommended standards.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: PRO: Representative Brown; Steve Lind, WA Traffic Safety Commission; Kathryn Kruger, Safety Restraint Coalition; Doug Bohlke, Evergreen State Taxi Assn.