

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**ESB 5632**

**AS PASSED SENATE, MARCH 16, 1993**

**Brief Description:** Establishing a license plate design.

**SPONSORS:** Senators Vognild, Prince, Skratek, Winsley, Loveland and Nelson

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION**

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Vognild, Chairman; Loveland, Vice Chairman; Skratek, Vice Chairman; Drew, Haugen, Nelson, M. Rasmussen, Sheldon, and Winsley.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass as amended.

Signed by Senator Oke.

**Staff:** Jennifer Joly (786-7305)

**Hearing Dates:** February 18, 1993; February 23, 1993

**BACKGROUND:**

Currently, the director of the Department of Licensing has the authority to designate license plate background designs. Washington State has four separate officially designated license plate background designs. Those backgrounds include: the Mount Rainier centennial background; the white background with green symbols; the lemon yellow personalized plate background; and the red, white, and blue Congressional Medal of Honor background.

Additionally, restored license plates are available for collectors' vehicles which are more than 30 years old. Restored license plates are those which were originally issued during the vehicle's model year. Generally, restored license plates have white backgrounds with symbols of varying shades of green.

**SUMMARY:**

A committee on license plates with membership appointed by the Governor is created. The members shall include: members of the Senate Committee on Transportation, House of Representatives Committee on Transportation, Department of Licensing, Washington State Patrol, and representatives from local law enforcement agencies throughout the state.

The committee on license plates shall establish a single license plate background design for licensed vehicles in this state and submit the design to the Department of Licensing by July 1, 1994. Prior to submitting the single license plate

background design to the department, the committee shall consider the fiscal impact of replacing the Mount Rainier background design plate.

The Department of Licensing shall ensure that the license plates conform to current highway safety and visibility standards.

Beginning January 1, 1995, the department shall issue all types of license plates only if they are of the same license plate background design established by the committee. However, the continued issuance and use of two types of special license plates, i.e., restored plates and Congressional Medal of Honor plates, is allowed.

The replacement of license plates which are not of the background design designated by the committee shall take place at the time of annual renewal. The cost of replacement plates shall be in addition to other renewal fees.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** available

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

Numerous license plate background designs create difficulties for law enforcement officials who often do not have the time to study a license plate in order to determine its origin.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** PRO: Deputy Chief Rick Jensen, Washington State Patrol, and on behalf of the Washington Assn. of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs