

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6089

AS PASSED SENATE, FEBRUARY 11, 1994

Brief Description: Creating the collegiate license plate fund program.

SPONSORS: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators West, Bauer, A. Smith, Vognild, Talmadge, Nelson, Prince, Oke, Sutherland, Winsley, Sheldon, M. Rasmussen, Deccio, Erwin, Roach, Ludwig, Drew, Loveland, Sellar, Cantu, Morton and Skratek; by request of Washington State University)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6089 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Vognild, Chairman; Loveland, Vice Chairman; Skratek, Vice Chairman; Drew, Haugen, Morton, Nelson, Oke, Prentice, Prince, M. Rasmussen, Schow, Sellar, Sheldon and Winsley.

Staff: Jennifer Joly (786-7305)

Hearing Dates: February 3, 1994; February 4, 1994

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

BACKGROUND:

Currently, the Department of Licensing has the authority to create, design, and issue special license plates, in lieu of regular or personalized license plates. In addition to ordinary fees required to register and license vehicles, the department may charge a fee of not more than \$35 to offset the costs of production of the special plates and for the administration of the special plate program; these fees are deposited in the motor vehicle fund.

Institutions of higher education, including state universities, regional universities, The Evergreen State College, community colleges, and technical colleges may petition the department to create, design, and issue a vehicle license plate emblem series that identifies that institution. The emblem may display a mascot, slogan, message or symbol. The department has the sole discretion for approving or disapproving institutions for participation in the vehicle license plate emblem program. Fees collected by the department for the emblems are to be deposited in the special vehicle license plate emblem account. Institutions approved for participation in the emblem program may collect additional fees from persons receiving an emblem to be used for purposes of the approved institution.

SUMMARY:

RCW 46.16.323, the vehicle license plate emblem program for institutions of higher education, is repealed.

Beginning January 1, 1995, a state university, regional university, or state college may apply to the Department of Licensing to issue a collegiate license plate series. A collegiate license plate displays a depiction of the mascot or symbol of the college or university, plus the name of the college or university.

The department and the president of the applicant college or university are responsible for determining the design, and whether to create or issue a series of collegiate license plates. The design, which shall be displayed on the department's officially designated mountain background license plate, shall be provided by the president of the requesting college or university or the president's designee.

In addition to all fees and taxes required to be paid upon registration and renewal of a motor vehicle, the owner of a motor vehicle issued a collegiate license plate shall pay an annual fee of \$30. The department shall deduct an amount not to exceed \$2 for administration and collection expenses. The remaining proceeds minus the cost of plate production shall be remitted to the State Treasurer for deposit in the collegiate license plate accounts.

A collegiate license plate account is established in the State Treasury for each college or university that develops and administers a collegiate license plate program. The money credited to each college and university shall be used for student scholarships.

If a person who has been issued collegiate license plate wishes to transfer such plates to another vehicle, a transfer fee of \$5 shall be charged in addition to all other appropriate fees. If collegiate license plates are not renewed, they shall be removed from the vehicle and new regular license plates shall be purchased.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

TESTIMONY FOR:

In these times of fiscal constraint, this program, which is wholly supported by fees from the sale of the collegiate license plates, makes sense. Scholarship funds generated by collegiate license plate sales could be used to target students who ordinarily would not have adequate access to financial aid. Each year, more than half of the eligible students applying for scholarships at Washington State University cannot be funded.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: PRO: Senator West, prime sponsor; Larry Ganders, Washington State University; Danny Okada, Washington Student Lobby; Sheila Vortman, University of Washington Alumni Association; Milly Baldwin, King County Cougars Club; Mike Worthy, Washington State University Alumni and President's Association; Larry Richardson, Council of Faculty Representatives

HOUSE AMENDMENT(S):

DOL's existing statutory authority to create, design, and issue special license plates is amended so that the proceeds from collegiate license plates may be deposited in the newly created license plate accounts earmarked for student scholarships, rather than the motor vehicle fund.

By January 1, 1996, DOL shall report to the Legislative Transportation Committee regarding the number of colleges or universities issued a collegiate license plate series, and the total number of collegiate plates issued for each participating college or university.