

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1246

As Reported By House Committee On:

Transportation

Title: An act relating to the regulation of private school buses.

Brief Description: Regulating private school buses.

Sponsors: Representatives Kremen, Goldsmith, Mastin, Kessler, Van Luven, Dyer, Sheldon, Hymes, Quall, Basich, Morris, Chandler, Backlund, Talcott and Sheahan.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/6/95, 2/16/95 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 25 members: Representatives K. Schmidt, Chairman; Benton, Vice Chairman; Mitchell, Vice Chairman; Skinner, Vice Chairman; R. Fisher, Ranking Minority Member; Hatfield, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Backlund; Blanton; Brown; Buck; Cairnes; Chandler; Chopp; Elliot; Hankins; Horn; Johnson; Koster; Ogden; Quall; Robertson; Romero; D. Schmidt; Scott and Tokuda.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative McMahan.

Staff: Mary McLaughlin (786-7309).

Background: A private carrier bus is a vehicle with a seating capacity of 11 or more, used regularly to transport persons to organized agricultural, religious, charitable or other activities. A school bus is a vehicle used regularly to transport children to and from school or in connection with school activities; the vehicle must meet the standards established by the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) in the "Specifications for School Buses."

Although private school buses meet the federal standard ("National Standards for School Buses"), a private school bus is classified as a "private carrier bus" rather than a "school bus." This is because the vehicle does not meet the more stringent school bus standards established by SPI. Because of this restriction, the words "school bus" cannot be displayed above front and rear windows of a private school bus.

A school bus and private carrier bus used as a school bus are exempt from annual vehicle registration [basic registration and motor vehicle excise tax (MVET)]. All public school bus drivers must have a commercial driver's license (CDL). The driver of a private carrier bus with a seating capacity of 16 or more passengers, including the driver, must have a CDL.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A private school bus may display the words "school bus" above the front and rear windows of the bus.

An existing private school bus need not comply with the requirements of the "Specifications for School Buses" published by SPI in order to display the words "school bus." However, private carrier buses must comply with the "National Standards for School Buses" established by the National Safety Council and adopted by the Washington State Patrol (WSP) by rule.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Private school buses may display "school bus" instead of "private school bus."

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Private school buses should be able to display "school bus" on the vehicles, just as public buses do.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Stephen Dinger, Washington Federation of Independent Schools (pro with amendment); and Bob Leichner, Washington State Patrol (pro).