

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 2166

As Passed House

March 12, 1997

Title: An act relating to barriers to coordinated transportation services.

Brief Description: Encouraging coordinated transportation services.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Transportation Policy & Budget (originally sponsored by Representatives Huff, K. Schmidt, Clements, Buck, Talcott, Johnson, Mitchell, Carlson, Delvin, Cooke and Chandler).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation Policy & Budget: 3/3/97, 3/4/97 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/12/97, 96-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION POLICY & BUDGET

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 25 members: Representatives K. Schmidt, Chairman; Hankins, Vice Chairman; Mielke, Vice Chairman; Mitchell, Vice Chairman; Fisher, Ranking Minority Member; Cooper, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Backlund; Cairnes; Chandler; Constantine; DeBolt; Gardner; Hatfield; Johnson; Murray; O'Brien; Ogden; Radcliff; Robertson; Romero; Scott; Skinner; Sterk; Wood and Zellinsky.

Staff: Gary Lebow (786-7304).

Background: In 1996 the Legislative Transportation Committee (LTC) was directed to conduct a public transportation assessment of eight tasks to address the state's interest in and evaluation of transit, transit financial planning, several transit-related accounts, transit effectiveness and efficiency, interjurisdictional interests, special needs transportation, and governance. Study oversight was provided by a Transit Working Group, which consisted of four House and four Senate members. The group forwarded a series of study recommendations to the LTC, and they are contained in the 1996 Public Transportation Assessment. One of the recommendations for special needs transportation was to establish an Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) to facilitate coordination among public and private transportation providers.

There are a number of agencies and programs involved with providing and/or sponsoring transportation services for persons with special needs. At the state level the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) play major roles in providing for transportation. At the local level transit agencies, area agencies on aging, senior services and county human services all provide transportation for special needs populations.

Transportation provided by an agency or a program is often for selected groups of people which meet specific eligibility requirements for that particular agency or program. This creates a situation in which multiple transportation providers are running duplicate routes serving only their selected population, which can result in costly and inefficient service and reduced service levels or areas.

The Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) regulates every private, nonprofit transportation provider in the state. This includes setting insurance requirements, safety requirements for vehicles used, rules to ensure that the vehicle used is adequate for the proposed service, and to regulate the fares charged by these providers.

Summary of Bill: The Legislature declares its intent to coordinate transportation services and programs to achieve increased efficiencies, resulting in expansion of services to a greater number of persons with special transportation needs.

The ACCT is created. The council consists of nine voting members and eight nonvoting legislative members. The nine voting members are the Secretary of Transportation, who will serve as chair; the secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services; the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and six members, serving two-year terms, appointed by the Governor, and representing consumers of special needs transportation, pupil transportation, the Community Transportation Association of the Northwest, the Community Action Council Association, and the Washington State Transit Association. Four members from the House of Representatives and four members from the Senate, representing each caucus and the Transportation, House Appropriations and Senate Ways and Means Committees, will be appointed by the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate respectively. The council is classified as a Class 1 board, which restricts reimbursement of members to expenses only.

The ACCT is responsible for: (1) developing standards and strategies for coordinating special needs transportation; (2) identifying, developing, funding (as resources are available), and monitoring demonstration projects; (3) identifying barriers to coordinated transportation; (4) recommending statutory changes to the Legislature to assist in coordinated transportation; and (5) working with the Office of Financial Management to make necessary changes for identification of transportation costs in executive agency budgets.

The council is directed to report to the Legislature on December 1, 1998, and every two years thereafter on council activities, including results of demonstration projects and associated benefits. The Department of Transportation is to provide support for the council. The council is dissolved on June 30, 2003.

The UTC's authority to regulate fares charged by paratransit providers is eliminated.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 24, 1997.

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

Testimony For: There have been numerous studies coming to the same conclusion that coordination of transportation services will generate significant savings and benefits. The problem is that nothing ever happens to implement the studies. This bill will establish coordination of transportation services as a priority of the Legislature and will provide a forum for the efforts to be successful. Coordination of transportation should not only apply to persons with special transportation needs, but also recognize that there are significant savings to be realized for other groups as well.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Gordon Kirkemo, Department of Transportation; Pat White, Department of Social and Health Services; Roger Eastman, Superintendent of Public Instruction; Tom Young, Pierce County Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board and Pierce Transit; Tracy Vandewall, Pierce County Parent Coalition; Donna Patrick, Developmental Disabilities Council; and Hil Hornung, Bellevue, Federal Way and Kent school districts.