

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2439

As Amended by the Senate

Title: An act relating to traffic safety education.

Brief Description: Providing for traffic safety education.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Transportation Policy & Budget (originally sponsored by Representatives D. Sommers, Costa, Benson, Sterk, Gombosky and O'Brien).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation Policy & Budget: 1/28/98, 2/5/98 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/16/98, 98-0.

Senate Amended.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION POLICY & BUDGET

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 26 members: Representatives K. Schmidt, Chairman; Hankins, Vice Chairman; Mielke, Vice Chairman; Mitchell, Vice Chairman; Fisher, Ranking Minority Member; Cooper, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Backlund; Buck; Cairnes; Chandler; Constantine; DeBolt; Gardner; Hatfield; Johnson; McCune; Murray; O'Brien; Ogden; Robertson; Romero; Scott; Skinner; Sterk; Wood and Zellinsky.

Staff: Jennifer Hanlon (786-7316).

Background: The Legislature created the Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC) to plan and supervise programs for the prevention of accidents on streets and highways. The commission also coordinates the development of traffic safety programs and works to promote and improve driver education.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), the Department of Licensing (DOL), and driver training schools provide information on traffic safety in traffic education courses and instructional materials.

DOL may require a driver to submit to an examination if the department determines that the driver is incompetent or otherwise not qualified to be licensed. Following the examination, the department may suspend or revoke the license of the driver or issue the driver a license subject to restrictions.

Summary of Bill: The WTSC will establish a program for administering grants for educational programs on pedestrian safety and the safe operation of bicycles. The commission should cooperate with the Criminal Justice Training Commission, the Bicycle Federation of America, the League of American Bicyclists, and other organizations in developing the program. In selecting grant recipients, the commission will look to the most effective programs for traffic safety.

The bicycle and pedestrian safety education account is created in the state treasury. Fines for bicycle traffic infractions are increased by 25 percent. Revenue collected from the increase in fines will be distributed to the safety education account.

SPI, DOL and driver training schools must provide information on the use of the left-hand lane by motor vehicles. Additionally, they must provide educational information on bicyclists' and pedestrians' rights and responsibilities.

When a driver is responsible for a crash resulting in the death of a person, DOL must require the driver to submit to an examination. The examination must be completed within 90 days after the department receives the accident report.

Bicycle equipment requirements for riding at night are changed.

EFFECT OF SENATE AMENDMENT(S): The Traffic Safety Commission must work with the stakeholders to develop a safety education program. The dedicated account for bicycle and pedestrian safety education is removed. Funds from the Insurance Commissioner's Regulatory Account may be used for the safety education program.

A driver responsible for a crash resulting in a fatality must be retested by the Department of Licensing within 120 days after the filing of the accident report. A driver responsible for a crash resulting in a serious injury may be retested by the Department of Licensing.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: It is beneficial to duplicate educational programs across the state. This bill will result in better cyclists and better drivers.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative D. Sommers, prime sponsor; Martha Jones, Cooper Jones' mother; David Jones, Cooper's father; Arnold Tomac, city of Redmond/Northwest Bicycle Federation; Mac Shelton, Brain Injury Association of Washington; Phil Miller, U.S. Cycling Federation; Lt. Steve Jewell, Washington State Patrol; Larry Leveen, Capital Bicycling Club; and Bob Myrick, Tacoma Wafflemen's Bicycle Club.