

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

HB 1552

Title: An act relating to vehicular assault.

Brief Description: Expanding the definition of vehicular assault.

Sponsors: Representatives Delvin, Constantine, McDonald, Murray, Bush, Scott, Lambert, Hatfield, Radcliff, Poulsen, Ballasiotes, Mastin, Mitchell, Kenney and Conway; by request of Washington State Patrol.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONS

Staff: Jean Ann Quinn (786-7310).

Background:

A person commits the crime of vehicular assault if the person operates a motor vehicle in a reckless manner or while under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and this conduct causes serious bodily injury to another person. Serious bodily injury— is defined to mean bodily injury which involves a substantial risk of death, serious permanent disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any part or organ of the body. Vehicular assault is a class B felony.

The statute does not define reckless manner.— However, the courts have defined it as meaning a heedless, careless, or rash manner or in a manner showing indifference to the consequences.— *State v. Patridge*, 47 Wash. 2d 640 (1955).

Summary:

The crime of vehicular assault can also be committed if the person operates a motor vehicle with disregard for the safety of others, and this conduct causes serious bodily injury to another person.

The statutory element with disregard for the safety of others— has been interpreted by the courts in the context of vehicular homicide as implying an aggravated kind of negligence, falling short of recklessness, but more serious than ordinary negligence.— *State v. Brooks*, 73 Wash. 2d 653 (1968).

Fiscal Note: Available.

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