

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1760

As Reported By House Committee On:
Transportation

Title: An act relating to rates charged for public conveyance or transportation of persons eligible under the federal Americans with disabilities act.

Brief Description: Conforming state charges for public conveyance or transportation of eligible persons with federal law.

Sponsors: Representatives Fisher, Scott, Radcliff, Edwards, Reardon and Hankins.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/24/99, 2/25/99 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) permits transit agencies to charge up to twice the base fare for specialized transit services such as dial-a-ride.
- This bill eliminates the restriction that fares be comparable for special needs transportation, but they must comply with the ADA.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 20 members: Representatives Fisher, Democratic Co-Chair; K. Schmidt, Republican Co-Chair; Cooper, Democratic 1st Vice Chair; Edwards, Democratic 2nd Vice Chair; Ericksen, Republican Vice Chair; Hankins, Republican Vice Chair; Buck; G. Chandler; DeBolt; Hatfield; Lovick; Mitchell; Morris; Murray; Ogden; Pflug; Radcliff; Romero; Schual-Berke and Scott.

Staff: Gene Baxstrom (786-7303).

Background:

Public transit agencies operating in Washington provide both fixed route operations and demand responsive para-transit services, most of which are to provide services

for persons with special transportation needs. Statewide, transit systems in 1997 provided approximately 5.9 million hours of fixed route services and 1.3 million hours of para-transit services. The cost of providing para-transit trips is substantially more expensive than fixed route service, with the cost per ride ranging from \$7 to \$25 per trip compared with \$1 to \$5 per trip on fixed routes.

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that transit systems provide para-transit service complementary to fixed route services. These para-transit services must provide origin to destination services within corridors with a width of three-fourths of a mile on each side of each fixed route. The act provides that fares for a trip charged to an ADA para-transit eligible user of the complementary para-transit service may not exceed twice the fare that would be charged to a full fare trip on fixed route service. Other language provides that elderly persons with disabilities be offered half-fare during off-peak times.

Washington law declares it to be unfair practice to commit an act which results in any distinction, restriction, or discrimination, or impose a larger sum than uniform rates charged other persons in any accommodation or service. Because of this law, and/or because of board policy, many transit system charge the same fare, or a lesser fare to para-transit eligible persons using special needs transit services.

Summary of Bill:

An exception is made to the restriction on charging other than uniform rates to all persons for transit service. This exception is that which is allowed under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act, which is not more twice the full fare charged to riders of public conveyance or transportation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This grants local agencies the discretion to charge higher fares for certain services which are more expensive to provide.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Dave Earling, Community Transit; Joyce Olson, Community Transit; and Paul W. Locke, citizen.