

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2560

As Passed House:

February 18, 2002

Title: An act relating to driver training schools.

Brief Description: Shifting approval of driver training schools from the superintendent of public instruction to the department of licensing.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Quall, O'Brien, Lovick, Mitchell, Clements, Sump, Simpson, Sehlin, Cooper, Delvin, Boldt, Morell, Kessler, Buck, Hankins, Fisher, Armstrong, Mielke, Rockefeller, Haigh, Nixon, Kenney and Jackley).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 1/30/02, 2/7/02 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/18/02, 95-0.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- The authority to approve driver training schools and to set training standards for driver training schools that provide driving instruction to Washington residents under age 18 is shifted from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to the Department of Licensing.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 26 members: Representatives Fisher, Chair; Cooper, Vice Chair; Lovick, Vice Chair; Mitchell, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Armstrong, Edwards, Haigh, Hankins, Hatfield, Holmquist, Jackley, Jarrett, Mielke, Morell, Murray, Ogden, Reardon, Rockefeller, Romero, Schindler, Simpson, Skinner, Sullivan, Wood and Woods.

Staff: Penny Nerup (786-7335).

Background:

Washington residents under age 18 are required to take a driver training class in order to obtain a driver's license, except under very limited and specific circumstances. These drivers may take their training classes within their public high schools or by attending classes at a driver training school.

Regardless of where the classes are held, current law requires that the driver training classes meet standards established by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). Driver training schools must be annually approved by the OSPI.

Because current law also requires the Department of Licensing (DOL) to oversee the licensing of driver training schools and their instructors, concern has been raised that driver training schools will be subjected to duplicate inspections of their business practices, facilities, records and insurance.

Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill:

Driver training classes offered to Washington residents under age 18 by driver training schools must meet standards established by the DOL. Driver training schools must be annually approved by the DOL. Driver training school instructors who teach students under 18 must have a background check at their own expense. The OSPI defines the curricula of courses offered by the public schools; the Driver Instructors Advisory Committee recommends the curricula of the courses offered by the driver training schools for approval by DOL.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: The current situation of dual oversight does not make sense. Centralizing regulatory authority with the DOL provides one location for complaints and questions. Driving schools already use the textbooks approved by the OSPI.

Testimony Against: The OSPI wants to assure the stability of instructional standards for all kids. The roads are safer because of the program the OSPI has already established and worked for. State safety standards are critical.

Testified: (In support) Representative Quall, prime sponsor; Derek Goudriaan, Department of Licensing; Dawn Vyvyan, Joe Hurley, Tom Harris, and Jim Ervine, Washington Professional Traffic Safety Association.

(With concerns) Debbie Cottonware, Washington Traffic Safety Education Association.

(Opposed) Terry Bergeson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction.