

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## HB 1460

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Enforcing seat belt laws as a primary action.

**Sponsors:** By Representatives Lovick, Jarrett, Hurst, Jackley, Cooper, Fisher, Edmonds, Morell, Ahern, Ogden, Simpson, O'Brien, Darneille, Kagi and Ruderman.

**House Committee on Transportation**  
**Senate Committee on Transportation**

### **Background:**

Except for those vehicle restraint laws specific to children six years of age and under, Washington's seat belt laws are a secondary action, meaning that an infraction may only be written after the officer stops the vehicle for another suspected traffic infraction, a violation of an equivalent local ordinance, or some other offense. Safety belt use laws are the only laws in America that make a distinction between primary (also known as "standard enforcement") and secondary enforcement.

Seventeen states, including California and Oregon, and British Columbia, have primary enforcement of seat belt laws. Studies show that seat belt usage rates in those states average 17 percent higher than states with secondary enforcement laws.

Studies also show that wearing seat belts saves lives and reduces the severity of injuries in a crash. The economic benefit of a primary enforcement law in Washington, as estimated by the National Traffic Safety Administration, is more than \$60 million per year.

### **Summary:**

The requirement for wearing a seat belt is enforced as a primary action.

### **Votes on Final Passage:**

House 54 44

Senate 26 22

**Effective:** June 13, 2002  
July 1, 2002 (Section 2)