

Transportation Committee

HB 1596

Brief Description: *Authorizing transportation for persons with special needs.*

Sponsors: *Representatives G. Chandler, Wood, Mulliken, Fisher, Mitchell, Ogden and Santos.*

Brief Summary of Bill

- *Permits certain transit agencies to provide service to special needs persons only.*
- *Defines those with special needs to include person who, because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age, cannot transport themselves.*

Hearing Date: *2/20/01*

Staff: *Gene Baxstrom (786-7303).*

Background:

Several different units of government, including public transportation benefit areas and county transportation authorities, are authorized to provide public transportation services. There are presently 25 systems providing public transportation services in 26 counties of the state. All but two of these systems are funded through a voter approved local option sales tax.

State law is silent on whether a public transportation system can be for a specific class of users. The authorization for public transportation agencies, however, is for providing public transportation services to best serve the residents of the area. State law does provide that fares can be adjusted for specific routes, classes of service, or distinguishable classes of users.

Propositions to provide public transportation services in some areas have been turned down by voters. Some feel that there is majority support for providing services for only those persons with special needs.

Summary of Bill:

Specific authority is granted to public transportation benefit areas and county transportation authorities to permit them to provide services only to persons with special needs.

The use of the sales tax for public transportation services provided by public transportation benefit areas and county transportation authorities is expanded, allowing it to be used for persons with special needs only.

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Requested on February 16, 2001.*

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