

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1699

As Passed House:

March 13, 2001

Title: An act relating to suspending the driving privileges of juveniles who have committed the offense of threatening to bomb a school building.

Brief Description: Suspending the driving privileges of juveniles who have committed the offense of threatening to bomb a school building.

Sponsors: By Representatives Alexander, Hunt, DeBolt and Romero.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Juvenile Justice: 2/14/01, 2/23/01 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/13/01, 84-10.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Suspends the driving privileges of a juvenile convicted of threatening to bomb or otherwise injure a school building.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUVENILE JUSTICE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Delvin, Republican Co-Chair; Dickerson, Democratic Co-Chair; Eickmeyer, Democratic Vice Chair; Marine and Republican Vice Chair; Armstrong.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Carrell, Darneille and Tokuda.

Staff: Jean Ann Quinn (786-7310).

Background:

It is illegal for any person to threaten to bomb or otherwise injure any school building, place of worship or public assembly, governmental property, or any other building, common carrier, or structure, or any place used for human occupancy. Repeating

information regarding the threat, knowing that the information is false, and if done to alarm the person to whom it is repeated, is also unlawful. The fact that the threat was a hoax is not a defense.

The crime is ranked as an offense category B on the juvenile offender sentencing grid, which means that a first-time juvenile offender would receive a standard sentence of local sanctions. Local sanctions can include any combination of the following: 0-30 days confinement; 0-12 months community supervision; 0-150 hours community service; and a fine of \$0 to \$500.

Summary of Bill:

The Department of Licensing is required to revoke the driving privileges of a juvenile 13 years or older who is convicted of threatening to bomb or otherwise injure a school building. If it is the juvenile's first offense for this crime, the juvenile's driving privileges are revoked for one year or until the juvenile reaches the age of 17, whichever is later. For second and subsequent offenses, the juvenile's driving privileges are revoked for two years or until the juvenile reaches the age of 18, whichever is later. Each offense requires a separate period of revocation, and all periods of revocation imposed are to run consecutively.

The juvenile may petition the court for an earlier reinstatement of his or her driving privileges. If it is the juvenile's first violation of this offense, the juvenile may petition the court for reinstatement 90 days after the juvenile turns 16 or 90 days after the judgment is entered, whichever is later. If it is the juvenile's second or subsequent violation of this offense, the juvenile may not petition the court for reinstatement until he or she turns 17, or one year after the judgment was entered, whichever is later. If the court grants the petition, the department is notified and the juvenile's driving privileges are reinstated.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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

Testimony For: The bill is responding to input and concerns from local school districts about continued bomb threats from juveniles in local schools, which are disruptive and costly to the schools and the taxpayers. They are also expensive in terms of time spent away from the classroom, and they compromise the sense of security of students, teachers, and parents. Driving privileges are very dear to the hearts of young men and women, and it is hoped that removing their ability to get a driver's license, or extending

the time frame for getting a license, will be a strong deterrent. It is hoped that the bill will parallel the success achieved by doing the same thing for juveniles convicted of drug and alcohol offenses.

Bomb threats have been a significant problem in the last calendar year in the Yelm School District. They occur all the way from elementary to high schools. It is very disruptive to the schools and causes copycats to come out. Closing down a school gives kids a tremendous feeling of power. The driver's license suspension will not stop bomb threats, but it is one arrow in the quiver to use to try to fight the problem. Even if this bill deters only a few kids, that still means a few less evacuations, which affect thousands of kids and parents.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Alexander, prime sponsor; Alan Burke, Superintendent of Yelm Schools; and Barbara Merten, Washington Association of School Administrators.