

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2941

As Passed House:

February 16, 2004

Title: An act relating to registration of vehicles based on residence.

Brief Description: Requiring vehicle registration at the residence address.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Murray, Ericksen, Hankins, Jarrett, McDermott, Rockefeller, Morris, G. Simpson, Wood, Campbell, Sommers, Santos, Sullivan, Wallace and Clibborn).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 1/27/04, 2/5/04 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/16/04, 74-24.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Requires vehicle owners to submit their residence address, under penalty of perjury.
- Requires Department of Licensing (DOL) to identify vehicles licensed to persons it believes are supplying an incorrect residential address.
- Redefines the term "renewal" to facilitate collection of taxes from persons bringing in used cars from out-of-state.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 25 members: Representatives Murray, Chair; Rockefeller, Vice Chair; Simpson, G., Vice Chair; Ericksen, Ranking Minority Member; Jarrett, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Campbell, Clibborn, Cooper, Dickerson, Edwards, Flannigan, Hankins, Hatfield, Hudgins, Lovick, Morris, Nixon, Rodne, Romero, Shabro, Sullivan, Wallace, Wood and Woods.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Armstrong, Kristiansen, Mielke and Schindler.

Staff: Jeff Doyle (786-7322).

Background:

Current law requires persons manifesting an intent to live or be located in Washington on more than a temporary basis to register their vehicles in Washington state. When registering a vehicle, persons must list their name and address on the application for registration. However, there is no legal requirement that the address given on the application be a person's residence. In fact, there is no definition of what constitutes "residence address" in the vehicle licensing statutes.

In 2002, the legislature authorized the formation of certain local and regional transportation districts. These districts were empowered to levy taxes and fees for the purpose of generating local revenue for transportation improvements within the locality. Some of these taxes and fees may be imposed upon vehicles registered within the taxing district. However, without a legal requirement that owners provide their residence address when registering their vehicles, it is very difficult for licensing agents to ascertain whether a person lives within a local taxing jurisdiction. At least one local transportation taxing district reports that some residents are registering their vehicles at addresses outside of the district in hopes of avoiding payment of local vehicle registration fees.

Also in 2002, the legislature intended to exempt new car sales from certain locally-imposed taxes and fees. To accomplish this, the law was written so that these local taxes would be imposed only upon vehicles "relicensed" in Washington. There is no current definition of the term "relicense" in the vehicle registration statutes. The DOL uses the term "renewal." The unintended effect of the terminology adopted in 2002 is that persons who bring their used vehicle into Washington (whether they are new residents or simply purchasers of a used vehicle) are not charged the same locally-imposed taxes and fees that are charged to other residents of the local taxing district.

Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill:

Persons registering or renewing their vehicle license in Washington must provide, under penalty of perjury, their residence address on the application for vehicle licensing, unless that person presents satisfactory evidence that he or she is not, in fact, a resident of the local taxing district; or that an exemption applies; or that he or she corrects the residence stated on the application and pays all applicable local taxes. The DOL must flag the vehicle licensing records of individuals it believes have incorrectly registered their vehicles.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Some People are evading payment of taxes that are lawfully due. This bill will mandate that vehicle owners properly register their vehicles at their primary residence.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Jan Novak, Washington Association of Vehicle Subagents; Glenn Cramer, Washington State Patrol; Anne Levinson, Monorail; and Robin Appleford, Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce.

(Concerns with original bill) Thad Duvall, County Auditor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.