

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1237

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to specialized commercial vehicles used for patient transportation.

Brief Description: Describing specialized commercial vehicles used for patient transportation.

Sponsors: By Representatives Newhouse, Cody, Clements, Bailey, Roach, Morrell, Lovick, Simpson, Murray, Chase, Kagi and Wallace.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 1/31/05, 2/3/05 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/3/05, 96-1.

Passed Senate: 4/13/05, 45-1.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Defines a stretcher as a cart for transporting a patient in a prone or supine position, but not including certain personal mobility aids.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 26 members: Representatives Murray, Chair; Wallace, Vice Chair; Woods, Ranking Minority Member; Skinner, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Buck, Campbell, Curtis, Dickerson, Ericksen, Flannigan, Hankins, Hudgins, Jarrett, Kilmer, Lovick, Morris, Rodne, Schindler, Sells, Shabro, Simpson, B. Sullivan, Takko, Upthegrove and Wood.

Staff: Beth Redfield (786-7347).

Background:

Ambulance services are licensed by the Department of Health. Ambulance personnel requirements include at least one person who shall be an emergency medical technician under standards of the Department of Health.

Current state law requires that patients who must be carried on a stretcher or who may require medical attention be transported in ambulances or aid vehicles operated by services licensed by the Department of Health.

For-hire vehicles are licensed by the Department of Licensing. Local governments may regulate the services of for-hire vehicles, which include stretcher vans and cabulances.

Summary of Bill:

A stretcher is defined as a cart commonly used in the ambulance industry for transporting patients in a prone or supine position. The term does not include personal mobility aids that recline at an angle or remain in a flat position that are owned or leased for at least one week by the individual being transported.

People who use a personal mobility aid may be transported by stretcher vans or cabulances.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This is an issue that has been around since the 1980s. This version approaches the problem from the point of view of the stretcher, not the vehicle. For people who use these mobility aids in a non-emergency situation, they do not need to ride in an ambulance. This will be a savings to people who use these transport aids. The bill represents a compromise between the disability community and the ambulance industry. Many people spend a lot of their life in a horizontal position yet do not have health care needs. Because of the requirement that they have to travel in an ambulance, they do not travel much. Removes restrictions while still protecting patient safety. The bill recognizes the difference between people who just need transportation and those who need medical care. The ambulance industry cares about patient safety and wants to protect integrity of the EMS system. Ambulances services shouldn't be tied up transporting people who don't need medical care. Stretcher cars started in the 1930s in Florida and every state has them now.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Newhouse, prime sponsor; Representative Cody; Toby Olson, Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment; Janet Kastl, Department of Health; Susie Tracy, American Medical Response; and Brad Bergener, Medstar Cabulance.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.