
Transportation Committee

HB 1879

Brief Description: Providing a funding source to assist students with driver's education costs.

Sponsors: Representatives Murray, Hankins, Cody, Simpson, Schual-Berke, Ericks, Chase, Hasegawa and Wood.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides funding for traffic safety education for all students through the assessment of a \$3 fee on each license plate issued.
- Allows the Superintendent of Public Instruction to retain up to five percent of the fees collected to cover administrative expenses related to the allocation of funds.
- Directs the board of directors of school districts to set a reduced fee for traffic safety instruction for low-income students.

Hearing Date: 3/2/05

Staff: David Munnecke (786-7315).

Background:

Traffic safety education is provided to students in most school districts in the state. Historically, these programs have been funded through a mixture of funds provided by the state, the school district and individual students' families. Until recently, state funds have been available to support all such traffic safety education programs, and an additional amount has been available specifically to reduce these fees for low-income students. During the 2001-2003 biennium, state funding for these programs was eliminated. As a result, approximately 35 school districts have reported dropping their traffic safety program due to lack of funding.

Summary of Bill:

Places a \$3 fee on each license plate issued at either initial vehicle registration or upon periodic replacement of license plates to be placed in the public safety and education account (PSEA). The revenues generated from this fee are to be used only for lowering the cost of traffic safety education programs accredited by school districts. The Superintendent of Public Instruction must determine the per-pupil reimbursement rate, and is allowed to deduct no more than five percent of the fees collected under this bill to cover the administrative costs associated with allocating these funds.

The board of directors of each school district or combination of school districts, currently required to set the traffic safety education fee, are also required by this bill to set a reduced fee for low-income students.

A "low income student" is a student who qualifies to receive school lunches on a reduced-cost or free basis.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 2005.