
Transportation Committee

SB 6415

Brief Description: Allowing interpreters to assist hearing impaired persons during driver's license examinations.

Sponsors: Senators Pridemore, McAuliffe, Mulliken and Kohl-Welles.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows a deaf or hearing impaired driver's license applicant to be accompanied during the skills test by an interpreter of the applicant's choosing at the applicant's expense.

Hearing Date: 2/21/06

Staff: David Munnecke (786-7315).

Background:

There are three tests that an applicant must pass in order to obtain a driver's license: a vision exam, a knowledge exam, and a skills exam. The Department of Licensing (DOL) may adopt rules relating to driver testing procedures.

The DOL policy, during the knowledge exam, is to hire a deaf interpreter for those applicants who think they would benefit from it. The interpreter may only assist the applicant in understanding the exam questions and choice of answers. Family members or friends may not be used as the interpreter.

In the skills exam, the DOL policy is to set aside additional time for the exam and to meet with the applicant before the exam to discuss preferred modes of communication. An interpreter is not allowed in the car during the skills exam.

Summary of Bill:

If a driver's license applicant is deaf or hearing impaired, the DOL is required to allow an interpreter in the car during the skills exam. The interpreter must be of the applicant's choosing and at the applicant's expense.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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