

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6545

As Passed Senate, February 11, 2006

Title: An act relating to the minimum height requirement for the attachment of vehicle license plates.

Brief Description: Removing the minimum height requirement for the attachment of vehicle license plates.

Sponsors: Senators Sheldon, Esser, Benson and Haugen; by request of Washington State Patrol.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/16/06 [DP].

Passed Senate: 2/11/06, 44-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Jacobsen, Vice Chair; Poulsen, Vice Chair; Benson, Ranking Minority Member; Benton, Berkey, Eide, Esser, Finkbeiner, Kastama, Mulliken, Sheldon, Spanel, Swecker and Weinstein.

Staff: Dory On (786-7321)

Background: Current law requires that vehicle license plates be attached conspicuously to the front and rear of the vehicle for which they are issued. License plates must be mounted horizontally at a distance of not less than one foot nor more than four feet from the ground. The state patrol may grant permission to deviate from the license plate mounting requirements if compliance with the requirements is impossible due to the body construction of the vehicle.

Many modern vehicles are manufactured with license plate mounting surfaces that are less than one foot from the ground. Despite receiving many requests to waive front license plate attachment requirements based upon vehicle construction, Washington State Patrol (WSP) has declined to grant the requested waivers citing front license plates as an important identification tool for law enforcement purposes.

Summary of Bill: Changes are made to the attachment requirements for vehicle license plates to permit mounting license plates closer to the ground than previously allowed.

Vehicle license plates must be placed conspicuously on the vehicle for which they are issued at a distance of not more than four feet from the ground.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: Front license plates are important tools for law enforcement purposes. The proposed change will make compliance easier for vehicle owners without compromising safety or law enforcement goals.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Captain Jeff De Vere, Washington State Patrol.