

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1588

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Transportation, April 2, 2007

Title: An act relating to providing mobility education to students in driver training programs.

Brief Description: Providing mobility education to students in driver training programs.

Sponsors: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Uptegrove, Wood, Hudgins, Takko, Moeller and Simpson).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/10/07, 67-30.

Committee Activity: Transportation: 3/22/07, 4/02/07 [DPA, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Marr, Vice Chair; Murray, Vice Chair; Swecker, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Clements, Delvin, Jacobsen, Kastama, Kauffman, Kilmer, Sheldon and Spanel.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Benton and Holmquist.

Staff: Martha Hankins (786-7429)

Background: Driver training and traffic safety education is provided by commercial driving schools licensed by the Department of Licensing, and by public schools with oversight provided by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). The curriculum provided by both commercial driver training schools and OSPI includes information on the safe and responsible operation of motor vehicles, the effects of alcohol and drug use, and the importance of sharing the road with motorcycles.

Mobility education means including bicycling, walking, and using transit as part of traffic safety and driver education courses.

Summary of Substitute Bill: This bill is named the Matthew Tatsuo Nakata act in memory of a pedestrian who was killed in a cross walk.

Driver training and traffic safety education courses must add bicycle and pedestrian safety to the curriculum. Students must be informed about the utility of bicycles and walking as mobility options.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

A pilot program for mobility education is established in King, Kitsap, and Spokane counties.

The curriculum must:

- provide education regarding the importance of sharing the road with bicyclists and pedestrians;
- educate students regarding the mass transit, bicycling, and walking; and
- contain both classroom and experiential components.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY RECOMMENDED AMENDMENT(S) AS PASSED COMMITTEE (Transportation): All driver education courses are instructed to include information about sharing the roads with all users, including bicycles and pedestrians. Instead of public schools teaching traffic safety education and driver training schools teaching driver training, applicants for a drivers license must complete a course in "traffic safety education and driver training." Instructors are licensed by DOL; an oversight committee includes representatives of bicycle, pedestrian, and transit groups. Removes the three county mobility education pilot project.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available on substitute; striking amendment requested on April 1, 2007.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Pedestrian safety is a priority in Seattle following the death of Mathew Tatsuo Nakata. This bill is a step in the right direction of making streets safer for pedestrians. The two issues are educating new drivers and increasing awareness about transportation alternatives. The current driver training curriculum needs significant strengthening. It's an issue of safety: drivers need educating on treating bicycles as vehicles. A pilot study will provide a measure of how to improve driver education.

CON: This bill is mostly redundant; the curriculum already being taught at driver training schools includes most of what is covered in this bill. Students have limited classroom time; additional requirements would sacrifice important safety information. Valuable class time shouldn't be spent on learning to use transit.

OTHER: No other states have mobility education programs of this type; the pilot program will require new curricula development. Costs were estimated in consultation with curriculum developers. The pilot program assumes a total of 1,200 students in three counties will participate, with an estimated six hours of additional course time for each student. The Department of Licensing will report on the success of the pilot program by June 30, 2009.

Persons Testifying: PRO: David Della, Seattle City Council; Brian Faller, Capital Bicycle Club & Bicycle Alliance of Washington; Genesee Adkins, Transportation Choices.

CON: Mike Jackson, Cascade Driving School; Dawn Vyvyan, Washington Professional Traffic Safety Education Association.

OTHER: Derek Goudriaan, Department of Licensing; Steve Lind, Washington Traffic Safety Commission.