

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5036

As Passed Senate, March 7, 2007

Title: An act relating to repealing the application of the sunset act to the intermediate driver's license program.

Brief Description: Repealing the application of the sunset act to the intermediate driver's license program.

Sponsors: Senators Eide, Weinstein, Brown, Rockefeller, Regala, Fraser, Murray, Berkey, Kauffman, Jacobsen, Keiser, Haugen, Rasmussen, Shin, Tom and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/14/07, 2/20/07 [DP, w/oRec].

Passed Senate: 3/07/07, 37-10.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Holmquist.

Staff: Martha Hankins (786-7429)

Background: In 2000, the Washington Legislature adopted a graduated driver's licensing system and created the intermediate driver's license program. Under this program, drivers in Washington go through an intermediate phase; between learning to drive and obtaining a regular, unrestricted license.

After possessing an instruction permit (sometimes called a learner's permit) for six months, passing a driver's education course, and passing a driver licensing exam, a person age 16 or older may apply for an intermediate driver's license (IDL). The applicant must present certification stating they have accumulated at least 50 hours of supervised driving practice, ten of which were at night. They must have a clean driving record for the previous six months and no drugs or alcohol offenses for the period of time they held an instruction permit.

The IDL places certain restrictions on young drivers:

- for the first six months no passengers under age 20, except family members;

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.

- then, until age 18, a maximum of three passengers under age 20 who are not family members; and
- no driving between the hours of 1 a.m. and 5 a.m. unless accompanied by a parent, guardian, or licensed driver over age 25.

Enforcement of these restrictions occurs as a secondary action; that is, the driver can be cited for violating the restrictions only if pulled over for another reason. The restrictions are lifted after one year if the holder has not been involved in an accident, committed a traffic offense, or violated the restrictions.

When drivers turn age 18, the intermediate driver's license automatically becomes a regular, unrestricted, driver's license.

The sunset review process offers the Legislature a method for evaluating whether a program should continue. Under current law, the IDL program is scheduled to sunset with a review in 2008 and termination in 2009.

Summary of Bill: This bill repeals the sunset review and termination of the IDL program, making it permanent.

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.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The intermediate driver's license restrictions have improved safety for drivers in Washington; further restrictions on intermediate drivers are a good idea. The IDL works and should definitely be continued.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Steve Lind, Washington Traffic Safety Commission; Dave Overstreet, America Automobile Association Washington; Capt. Jeff DeVere, Washington State Patrol.