

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESSB 5902

C 215 L 10
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Promoting accessible communities for persons with disabilities.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Pridemore, Fraser, McAuliffe, Kline, Kohl-Welles and McDermott).

Senate Committee on Ways & Means
House Committee on Human Services
House Committee on Ways & Means

Background: Currently, any person blocking a parking space reserved for a person with physical disabilities or its access aisle can be fined a penalty of \$250. A \$250 fine can also be charged to any persons using a special license plate or placard who do not meet the qualifications. Local jurisdictions keep this amount to use for law enforcement.

In 2006 ESHB 2479 required county auditors to establish an advisory committee to assist elections officials in improving the accessibility of elections for voters with disabilities, made up of people with diverse disabilities and accommodation experts. Counties may form joint advisory committees if the total population of the joining counties does not exceed 30,000 and the counties are geographically adjacent.

The Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment was created by executive order in 1987 and advises the Governor, Legislature and other policy-makers on issues affecting people who have disabilities. The committee also recognizes employers employing people with disabilities, monitors equal opportunity and access legislation, and provides training and technical assistance to the business community and the public. At least 50 percent of the members are required to be persons with a disability. The committee is staffed and supported by the Employment Security Department.

The Emergency Management Council advises the Governor and the General of the Washington Military Department regarding state and local emergency management. The council consists of 17 members appointed by the Governor and includes representatives of local governments, including cities and counties, sheriffs, police and fire chiefs, the Washington State Patrol, and professionals knowledgeable in emergency and hazardous materials management. Council duties include developing recommendations for improving emergency management practices, conducting an annual assessment of statewide emergency preparedness, and acting as the state emergency response commission.

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.

Summary: The Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment must oversee grant funding for proposals from accessible community advisory committees that promote greater awareness of disability issues. They must also establish an accessible communities website to provide technical assistance to local governments and accessible community advisory committees, examples of best practices, and a searchable listing of local public accommodations.

The county advisory committees are renamed to accessible community advisory committees and these committees may be reimbursed for travel and meeting costs and receive grant funding. Counties looking to form joint committees can exceed a combined population of 30,000 as long as not more than one of the participating counties has a population greater than 70,000. Counties may also create an Accessible Community Committee if they don't have an existing committee to expand.

A \$200 assessment is added to the penalty currently charged for parking in or blocking a space reserved for persons with physical disabilities and the infraction is changed from a traffic infraction to a parking infraction. The courts retain the discretion to reduce the entire penalty but must do so proportionally. Of this assessment \$100 must be deposited into the Accessible Communities Account, also created in this bill. Expenditures from the account can be used for:

- reimbursing travel and meeting expenses for county accessible community advisory committees and the disaster response work group;
- creating and maintaining the accessible communities website;
- making changes to court software;
- providing technical assistance for county accessible community advisory committees; and
- issuing grants to county accessible community advisory committees.

The remaining \$100 of the assessment must be deposited into the Multimodal Transportation Account to be used for grants for special needs transportation. If less than the full penalty is imposed, proportionate amounts must be deposited into the two accounts.

Only the Commissioner of the Employment Security Department may authorize expenditures. The account is budgeted but does not require an appropriation and earns interest.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	37	11	
House	94	4	(House amended)
House	93	4	(House receded/amended)
Senate	44	4	(Senate concurred)

Effective: June 10, 2010