

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1635

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Transportation, March 31, 2011

Title: An act relating to reducing customer wait times at driver licensing offices.

Brief Description: Concerning the administration of exams for and issuance and renewal of certain drivers' licenses and identicards.

Sponsors: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Upthegrove, Clibborn, Eddy, Armstrong, Liias, Rivers, Angel, Van De Wege, Wilcox, Maxwell, Rolfes, Finn, Sullivan, Dammeier, Orwall, Warnick and Moscoso).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/05/11, 97-1.

Committee Activity: Transportation: 3/21/11, 3/31/11 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; White, Vice Chair; King, Ranking Minority Member; Fain, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Delvin, Eide, Ericksen, Hill, Litzow, Nelson, Prentice, Ranker, Sheldon, Shin and Swecker.

Staff: Janice Baumgardt (786-7319)

Background: An applicant for a new or renewed driver's license must successfully pass a driver licensing examination to qualify for a driver's license. The driver's license examination includes a written examination that tests an applicant's knowledge of traffic laws and a driving examination that tests the ability of the applicant to safely operate a motor vehicle.

Applicants under the age of 18 must complete a traffic safety education course in order to become eligible to receive a driver's license. Driver training schools are licensed by the Department of Licensing (DOL). The Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is responsible for overseeing traffic safety education courses provided by school districts.

A motorcycle endorsement is required to operate a motorcycle on public highways. Applicants must pass both a knowledge test and a riding test to receive an endorsement.

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.

DOL may waive the riding portion of the test for a person who completes a private motorcycle skills education course that has been approved by DOL.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Amendments): Driver training schools licensed by DOL and school districts that offer a traffic safety education program under the supervision of OSPI are authorized to administer driver licensing examinations. In addition, motorcycle training schools that are under contract with DOL are authorized to administer the motorcycle endorsement examination.

DOL is required to adopt rules to oversee the driver training school's administration of the driver's license examination. OSPI is required to work in consultation with DOL to develop standards for the administration of the driver licensing examinations that are comparable to the standards required of driver training schools.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Amendments as Passed Committee): Clarifying language is added directing that the agreements between DOL and school districts must take into account the unique nature of school district facilities and school hours.

The advisory committee requirement is replaced with language requiring DOL to include a representative from each stakeholder group in any communications regarding the transition to school districts and driver training schools administering the exams. The stakeholder groups are listed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Proposed Amendments as Heard in Committee:
PRO: Wait times at DOL licensing service offices are too long. We should take advantage of the infrastructure already in place. Driver Training schools already require an exam to pass the course and are qualified to do this work.

CON: This bill will displace work currently being done by public employees. There must be oversight to ensure public safety.

OTHER: It is a conflict of interest to have the schools who are providing the training to also do the testing.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Uptegrove, prime sponsor; Don Munro, Munro's Driving; J. C. Fawcett, Defensive Driving School and Professional Driving School Association; Alan Haight, DOL.

CON: Vince Oliveri, PTE Local 117.

OTHER: Lucinda Young, WEX.