

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5220

As of February 8, 2011

Title: An act relating to advertising on school buses.

Brief Description: Authorizing advertising on school buses.

Sponsors: Senators Shin, Tom and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/03/11.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

Background: Current law directs the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to adopt and enforce rules to govern the design, marking, and mode of operation of school buses.

The rules that have been adopted by the superintendent specify that any signs and markings on the exterior of a school bus are limited to placement of the U.S. flag as prescribed by law, the requirements for color, and any applicable requirements for safety standards. The rules that have been adopted for signs and markings on the interior of any bus must be limited to required manufacturers' equipment instruction and the SPI's school bus specifications manual.

Summary of Bill: The SPI must allow school districts to place advertising and educational material on and in school buses if it is approved by the school district board of directors. The advertising and education material must not be placed on the front or rear of the school bus.

Revenue received by the school district for the advertising and education material must be deposited in the school district's general fund or transportation vehicle fund.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 21, 2011.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: We are going through an economic recession, but to cut the education budget is beyond me. Seven other states in the country are already advertising on school buses. Each school district can raise \$15,000 to \$50,000 or more. The money will be given to school districts to use to their discretion. This is a competitive time and education is key to the competition.

CON: While we appreciate interest to generate more money, we are concerned advertisements will (1) distract citizen drivers; (2) increase maintenance costs for local bus barns; and (3) distract school boards from their central purpose, which is student learning. Advertisements don't add to safety and they commercialize the educational system. We recognize the symbol of the big yellow bus and are concerned about impact of a colored bus. We will lose students on the bus because of the colored ads. Use the bill Senator Hobbs has for ticketing people driving around school buses instead. Advertisers will want to sell in places that get the most attention. Students riding to and from schools are a captive audience. How can school districts deny advertising for one vendor and not another? School districts will incur legal costs from deciding who can advertise. The cost of implementing an ad program is not something school districts can absorb. Schools can continue to advertise in current venues such as stadiums. If the bill moves forward, dedicate the funds to transportation.

OTHER: We appreciate creative ways to bring new revenue to school districts and want to be part of the conversation. Give school districts the ability to implement this legislation more easily and clearly explain the Legislature's intent. School districts will have lots of concerns around this issue. Leave total discretion to the districts to decide whether or not they will adopt this. Leave model policies and end dates open ended.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Shin, prime sponsor.

CON: Allan Jones, OSPI, Marcia Fromhold, Washington Association for Pupil Transportation; Doug Nelson, PSE/SEIU 1948; Nancy Moffatt, Washington Association of School Business Officials.

OTHER: Marie Sullivan, Washington State School Directors' Association.