

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5540

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As of March 24, 2011

**Title:** An act relating to automated school bus safety cameras.

**Brief Description:** Authorizing the use of automated school bus safety cameras.

**Sponsors:** Senators Hobbs, Delvin, King and Hewitt.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 2/14/11.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Staff:** Katherine Taylor (786-7434)

**Background:** Under current law, the driver of a vehicle upon overtaking or meeting from either direction any school bus which has stopped on the roadway for the purpose of receiving or discharging any school children must stop the vehicle before reaching the school bus when there is in operation a visual stop signal on the school bus. The driver must not proceed until the school bus resumes motion or the visual stop signals are no longer activated.

**Summary of Bill:** An automated school bus safety camera is affixed to a school bus for the purposes of recording one or more sequenced photographs of the rear of a vehicle that drives past school buses when the stop paddle and flashing lights are deployed.

School districts are authorized to install school safety cameras with the following requirements:

- infractions are processed like parking tickets;
- cameras can only take photographs of the back of a vehicle and those photographs may only be used to enforce this infraction;
- infractions must be mailed to the vehicle owner within 14 days; and
- any compensation paid to the vendor of the equipment may not be based upon infractions or revenue generated.

Before entering into a contract, a school district is required to follow the competitive bid process to ensure the most beneficial contract to the school district.

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Any revenue collected from the infractions, less the cost to operate the program, must be used for school zone safety projects.

If a driver does not pay an infraction resulting from a school bus safety camera, the driver cannot renew his or her license until it has been paid.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 11, 2011.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains several effective dates. Please refer to the bill.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: School children are frequently injured and sometimes killed by cars that illegally pass school buses when the buses are stopped and children are exiting the bus. Installing school bus stop paddle cameras would deter drivers from illegally passing school buses. It is very difficult for a bus driver to see a driver that is illegally passing a school bus.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Allan Jones, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Doug Nelson, Public School Employers of Washington; Brennor Beck, Peninsula School District.