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## Transportation Committee

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### HB 1994

**Brief Description:** Expanding traffic safety education requirements for certain driver's license applicants and drivers.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Ryu, Moscoso, Ortiz-Self and Tarleton.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes traffic safety education requirements for most driver's license applicants between 18 and 24 years of age and for drivers seeking to reapply for a license after it was revoked as a result of certain driving offenses.
- Creates a program to provide financial assistance to certain low-income driver's license applicants who are required by this Act to take a traffic safety education course.

**Hearing Date:** 2/18/15

**Staff:** Andrew Russell (786-7143).

#### **Background:**

##### Obtaining a Driver's License.

To obtain a driver's license, most applicants must demonstrate: (1) their ability to see and follow highway signs, (2) their knowledge of traffic laws, and (3) an ability to operate a motor vehicle safely. These tests may be waived for persons renewing their licenses and for those who surrender a valid driver's license from their previous home state. In addition to these tests, applicants who are under 18 years of age must also complete a traffic safety education course offered by a school district or by a private driver-training school. These courses must cover certain aspects of safe driving, such as pedestrian and bicycle safety, motorcycle awareness, and the effects of alcohol and drug use on drivers. The courses must provide at least 30 hours of classroom learning, and they generally must provide at least six hours of behind-the-wheel training. Additionally, the parents of applicants who are under 18 years of age must certify that the applicant has had at least 50 hours of driving experience.

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*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.*

### Revoking a Driver's License.

The Department of Licensing (DOL) must revoke the license of any driver who is convicted of vehicular assault, driving a motor vehicle under the influence of an intoxicating liquor or narcotic drug, any felony in which a motor vehicle is used, failure to stop or render aid in the event of a motor vehicle accident, perjury or making a false affidavit to the DOL, and reckless driving. A revocation for any of these violations must last for at least one year. Additionally, the license of a person who commits vehicular homicide or who has three reckless driving convictions within a two-year period must be revoked for two years. After the revocation period has expired, the person must reapply to the DOL in order to receive a driver's license. As a part of that process, the DOL must be satisfied with the applicant's driving ability, the applicant must provide proof of insurance, and the applicant must pay a reissue fee of at least \$75.

### **Summary of Bill:**

#### Young Driver Risk Prevention Traffic Safety Course.

Any applicant for his or her first Washington driver's license, who is between 18 and 24 years of age, must complete a young driver risk prevention traffic safety course. This course must be offered by private driver training schools, unless a school can demonstrate that offering this course would be a hardship. The course must be no more than 10 hours, with three of these hours as behind-the-wheel instruction. The additional instruction time may be provided online. The DOL, in consultation with the Washington Traffic Safety Commission, must develop the curriculum for the course, which must cover: the dangers of distracted driving; safe driving techniques concerning hazards, such as severe weather and sharing the road with other vehicles; the duties of drivers, such as insurance requirements; and the effects of alcohol and drug use on motor vehicle operators.

An applicant is exempt from the young driver risk prevention traffic safety course requirement if the applicant holds a license from another state, and he or she either: (1) completed a course comparable to Washington's; (2) has held the license for at least a year; or (3) is an active member of the military. Additionally, the course requirement may be waived if an applicant is unable to take or complete the course, a need exists for the applicant to operate a motor vehicle, and the applicant has the ability to operate a motor vehicle without jeopardizing the safety of others.

#### High-Risk Driver Traffic Safety Course.

If a driver has had his or her license revoked, he or she must complete a high-risk driver traffic safety course before the DOL may reinstate the license. This course must be offered by private driver training schools, unless a school can demonstrate that offering this course would be a hardship. Additionally, the course must be no more than 10 hours, with three of these hours as behind-the-wheel instruction. The additional instruction time may be provided online. The DOL, in consultation with the Washington Traffic Safety Commission, must develop the curriculum for the course, which must cover: the dangers of distracted driving; safe driving techniques concerning hazards, such as, severe weather and sharing the road with other vehicles; the duties of drivers such as insurance requirements; and the effects of alcohol and drug use on motor vehicle operators.

#### The High-Risk and Young Driver Safety Education Program.

Drivers who must take either a young driver risk prevention or a high-risk driver traffic safety course must, in addition to any other required fees, pay a fee of no more than \$5. This fee is deposited into the High-Risk and Young Driver Safety Education Account. The funds in this account may be used only to administer the High-Risk and Young Driver Safety Education Program, which provides financial assistance to people who meet the statutory definition of "indigent" and who are required to enroll in either a young driver risk prevention or a high-risk driver traffic safety course.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect on January 1, 2017.