

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2417

As Reported by House Committee On:
Transportation

Title: An act relating to modifying certain driver's license requirements.

Brief Description: Modifying certain driver's license requirements.

Sponsors: Representatives Pike, Moeller and Wylie.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 1/21/16, 2/4/16 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Augments current requirements for receiving an intermediate driver's license by requiring the contents of the intermediate license logbook to be verified by the driving road test exam administrator prior to administration of the driving exam.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 22 members: Representatives Clibborn, Chair; Farrell, Vice Chair; Fey, Vice Chair; Moscoso, Vice Chair; Orcutt, Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Harmsworth, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Gregerson, Hayes, Hickel, McBride, Morris, Ortiz-Self, Pike, Riccelli, Rossetti, Sells, Shea, Stambaugh, Tarleton and Young.

Staff: Jennifer Harris (786-7143).

Background:

A person is eligible for a driver's license only once he or she reaches the age of 18. Individuals between the ages of 16 and 18 may be eligible for an intermediate driver's license if certain criteria are met. To obtain an intermediate driver's license, an applicant must: (1) have possession of a valid instruction permit for at least six months; (2) have passed a driver

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licensing examination; (3) have passed a course of driver's education; (4) present certification by his or her parent, guardian, or employer to the Department of Licensing (DOL) stating that the applicant has met supervised driving requirements and that the applicant has not been issued a notice of traffic infraction or cited for a traffic violation that is pending at the time of the application; (5) not have been convicted of or found to have committed a traffic violation in the past six months; and (6) not have been adjudicated for an offense involving the use of alcohol or drugs during the period the applicant held an instruction permit.

An intermediate license logbook is provided by the DOL to be used to record supervised driving practice and to track that minimum requirements are met. There is currently no legal or regulatory requirement to present the logbook before an applicant can receive an intermediate driver's license. To be eligible to receive an intermediate driver's license, a parent, guardian, or employer of an applicant must certify that the applicant has had at least 50 hours of driving experience, 10 of which were at night, during which the driver was supervised by a person at least 21 years of age who has had a valid driver's license for at least three years.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The contents of the intermediate license logbook must be verified by the driving road test exam administrator prior to administration of the exam. To be verified as complete, the driver licensing examination administrator must confirm that the required contents of the presented logbook meet driving experience requirements.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill adds an intent section to the bill, specifies that the driver licensing examination administrator confirm that the required contents of the presented logbook meet driving experience requirements, and removes the requirement that the driving road test include a demonstration by the applicant of the driving skills commonly required in the operation of a motor vehicle and be developed to take at least 30 minutes to administer.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect on January 1, 2017.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) A Young Driver Safety Task Force was convened this past summer in the 18th District with the goal of finding ways to reduce young driver fatalities and serious injury accidents. This bill is part of the output of that task force's efforts. In Clark County, there were 64 serious injury accidents and 24 fatalities of young drivers in 2013. One of the

findings of the task force is that there is very little accountability on the logbook currently required by statute. This is a two-part bill. When a student presents a logbook, the DOL or a licensed teacher is required to look at the logbook and verify that 50 hours of driving, including 10 hours of night-time driving, were completed. This change would result in minimum additional expenditures being required. The other part of the bill adds more rigor to the driving test. Right now the driving test only includes several basic movements. This change will help to ensure that young drivers are proficient in all aspects of driving.

From 2012 to 2014, young drivers were involved in 423 fatalities and 2,057 serious injury crashes in the state. In these crashes, impairment, speeding, lack of sleep, not using a seat belt, and drowsy driving, were overrepresented factors for young drivers as compared to others. The Traffic Injury Research Foundation has been doing the most cutting edge research on improving young drivers' driving abilities. A meaningful driver test and model intermediate driver's licensing are both needed. Young drivers need to get experience behind the wheel and the logbook is part of ensuring that happens. This bill takes a step in the right direction by requiring logbook verification and increasing the length of driving test time.

The difference between a safe and a potentially unsafe driver can be subtle and it can take time to differentiate between the two. The behind-the-wheel driving test is the crucial determinant of the difference. A 30-minute driving test could test drivers' consistency and predictability in decision-making in a variety of situations. It could also gauge a driver's situational awareness, a driver's ability to recognize potential hazards, and how the driver reacts to these hazards. Most European countries have driving tests that take 60 minutes to complete. Even a 30-minute driving test is shorter than the time these tests take in other developed countries that have more thorough testing, better systems in place, and have achieved steeper reductions in fatality trends.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Pike, prime sponsor; Shelly Baldwin, Washington Traffic Safety Commission; and Mark Butcher.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.