
Transportation Committee

SSB 5957

Brief Description: Creating a pedestrian safety advisory council.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Liias, Rivers, Billig, King, Hobbs, Frockt and Hasegawa).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Establishes the Pedestrian Safety Advisory Council (Council) within the Washington Traffic Safety Commission to review and analyze data related to pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries.
- Provides the members who will comprise the Council and directs what the Council may review.
- Requires the Council to provide annual reports to the Legislature and must provide a final report that recommends whether the Council should be continued and how it could be improved.
- Provides certain legal protections to the members of the Council and for information produced by or shared with the Council.

Hearing Date: 3/25/15

Staff: Andrew Russell (786-7143).

Background:

The Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC) was established in 1967, and oversees efforts to improve safety on Washington's public highways. In directing its work, the WTSC uses Target Zero, Washington State's Strategic Highway Safety Plan. The WTSC also collects fatal and serious injury crash data, engages in research studies, and oversees highway safety pilot projects.

Summary of Bill:

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.

The WTSC must convene a Pedestrian Safety Advisory Council (Council). The members of the Council may include a coroner from the county where the most pedestrian deaths have occurred and representatives from each of the WTSC, the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, the Washington State Department of Transportation, municipalities in which each pedestrian fatality occurred if the city wants to participate, and a pedestrian advocacy group. The Council may also invite representatives from other stakeholder groups to participate.

The purpose of the Council is to review and analyze data related to pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries to identify points at which the transportation system can be improved and to identify patterns in pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries. The Council may examine the statutes, ordinances, and policies governing pedestrians and traffic related to the incidents. The Council may also review law enforcement incident reports, victim, witness, and suspect statements, and any other information determined to be relevant for the review.

The Council must meet quarterly and must provide a report and make recommendation on measures that could improve pedestrian safety by December 31 of each year. The report must be provided to the Governor, the Transportation committees of the Legislature, and all municipal governments and state agencies participating in the panel. By December 1, 2020, the Council must report to the Legislature on the strategies that have been deployed to improve pedestrian safety by the Council and make recommendations whether the Council should be continued and how it could be improved.

Representatives of the WTSC and the other members of the Council are immune from civil liability for the good-faith exercise of the duties of the council related to the reviewing of fatalities and serious injuries. Nothing in the Act is intended to create a private civil cause of action.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.