
Judiciary Committee

SSB 6360

Title: An act relating to the consolidation of traffic-based financial obligations through a unified payment plan system.

Brief Description: Developing a plan for the consolidation of traffic-based financial obligations.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Law & Justice (originally sponsored by Senators O'Ban, Carlyle, Lias, Jayapal, Frockt, King, Pearson, Pedersen, Hasegawa and Chase; by request of Attorney General).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Tasks the Office of the Attorney General (AGO) with convening a workgroup to provide input and feedback on the development of a plan and program for statewide consolidation of an individual's traffic-based financial obligations into a unified and affordable payment plan.
- Requires the AGO to submit a report, by December 1, 2017, detailing its recommendations and the plan and program.

Hearing Date: 2/23/16

Staff: Cece Clynych (786-7195).

Background:

A notice of a traffic infraction is a determination that a person has committed the traffic infraction, and the determination is final unless the person contests the infraction. A person who receives a notice of a traffic infraction may either pay the fine or request a hearing to contest the notice. If the person fails to pay the fine or fails to appear at a requested hearing, the court will enter an order assessing the monetary penalty for the traffic infraction.

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.

A form for a notice of a traffic infraction must include a statement that the person may be able to enter into a payment plan with the court. If a court determines, in its discretion, that a person is unable to pay immediately, the court must enter into a payment plan with the person if less than one year has passed since the infraction became due. If the person has previously been granted a payment plan for the same fine, or if the person is in noncompliance with any previous or existing payment plan, the court has the discretion to enter into a payment plan with the person. A court may administer the payment plan, or a court may contract with outside entities to administer the payment plan.

Failure to respond to the notice, pay the fine, or comply with a payment plan results in license suspension.

Some states have established statewide relicensing programs that enable drivers whose licenses are suspended for delinquent traffic fines to consolidate their fines into an affordable payment plan and have their licenses reinstated.

Summary of Bill:

The Office of the Attorney General (AGO) must convene a work group of stakeholders to provide input and feedback on the development of a plan and program for the efficient statewide consolidation of an individual's traffic-based financial obligations into a single, affordable payment plan. The work group shall convene as necessary, and shall provide final feedback and recommendations to the AGO no later than September 15, 2017.

The following must be invited to participate in the work group:

- the administrator for the courts or his or her designee;
- the director of the Department of Licensing or his or her designee;
- a district or municipal court judge, appointed by the District and Municipal Court Judges' Association;
- a prosecutor, appointed by the Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, or the prosecutor's designee;
- a public defender, jointly appointed by the Washington Defender Association and the Washington Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers;
- a district or municipal court administrator or manager, appointed by the District and Municipal Court Management Association;
- a representative of a civil legal aid organization, appointed by the Office of Civil Legal Aid;
- the chief of the Washington State Patrol or the chief's designee;
- a representative of a statewide association of police chiefs and sheriffs, selected by the association;
- the director of the Washington Traffic Safety Commission or the director's designee;
- a representative of a statewide association of counties, selected by the association; and
- a representative of a statewide association of collection professionals.

The AGO must submit a report detailing its recommendations and the plan and program to the Supreme Court, the Governor, and the appropriate committees of the Legislature no later than December 1, 2017.

The act expires December 31, 2017.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 21, 2016.

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