

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5724

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As of February 11, 2015

**Title:** An act relating to committing state and federal support to the safe routes to school program.

**Brief Description:** Concerning funding for the safe routes to school program.

**Sponsors:** Senators Billig, Rivers, Liias, Fain, Hobbs, Frockt, Rolfes, Fraser, Hasegawa, Roach, Jayapal, Habib and Conway.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 2/10/15.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Staff:** Amanda Cecil (786-7429)

**Background:** As part of the federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users – SAFETEA-LU – act of 2005, funding was provided for a Safe Routes to School program. In 2012 a new federal funding authorization was enacted, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act – MAP-21, that took the previously dedicated federal funding for the Safe Routes to School program and made it part of the Transportation Alternatives program. Funding in the Transportation Alternatives program may be used for safe routes to school investments but are not dedicated to the program.

In 2009 the Legislature created a state Safe Routes to School program located within the Washington State Department of Transportation. The purpose of the program is to:

- enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school;
- make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age; and
- facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools.

In the 2013-15 biennium \$6.8 million in state funds from the Highway Safety Account were appropriated to the Safe Routes to School program as a result of fee increases that were enacted during the 2012 legislative session.

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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.*

**Summary of Bill:** At least \$10.4 million of federal funds are dedicated to the Safe Routes to School program each biennium. The federal funds must come half from the Transportation Alternative program and half from the Highway Safety Improvement program or equivalent federal funding programs.

At least \$6.8 million from the Highway Safety Fund must be dedicated to the Safe Routes to School program each biennium.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: The three top priorities of state government are education, transportation, and health and safety; this bill addresses all three. This is not just an urban program but rather a program that provides statewide support to urban and rural schools. This does not ask for additional revenue but just to continue funding at current levels. Government has a role in making healthy choices easier and teaching children that healthy habits have long-term impacts on behavior. Making walking and biking safer and more accessible lessens the burdens on society by teaching people to make healthy choices. Unsafe roads leads to family tragedies and this impacts not only those that are directly affected but also those who witness these tragedies.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Billig, prime sponsor; Blake Trask, WA Bikes; Vic Colman, Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition; Lindsay Hovind, American Heart Assn.; Caron LeMay, citizen.