

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5957

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Transportation, February 25, 2015

Title: An act relating to creating a pedestrian fatality and serious injury review panel.

Brief Description: Creating a pedestrian fatality and serious injury review panel. [**Revised for 1st Substitute:** Creating a pedestrian safety advisory council.]

Sponsors: Senators Liias, Rivers, Billig, King, Hobbs, Frockt and Hasegawa.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/23/15, 2/25/15 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5957 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators King, Chair; Benton, Vice Chair; Fain, Vice Chair; Hobbs, Ranking Minority Member; Liias, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cleveland, Ericksen, Habib, Jayapal, Litzow, Pedersen, Rivers and Sheldon.

Staff: Kim Johnson (786-7472)

Background: The Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC) is the designated highway safety office for Washington. According to the WTSC, in 2014, there were 67 pedestrian-vehicle collision fatalities, and 283 pedestrian-vehicle collision serious injuries in Washington.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): The WTSC must convene a pedestrian safety advisory council. The council may include, but is not limited to the following members:

- a representative from the WTSC;
- a coroner from the county where the most pedestrian deaths have occurred;
- a representative from the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs;
- a representative from the Department of Transportation;
- a representative from cities, and a representative from a municipality in which each pedestrian fatality occurred if the city wants to participate; and
- a representative from a pedestrian advocacy group.

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 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 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/or 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 this act is intended to create a private civil cause of action.

The council expires June 30, 2017.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute): Changes the name of the panel to the pedestrian safety advisory council.

An expiration date is provided for June 30, 2021.

Authorizes rather than requires the review of all accident reports and witness statements, and laws and ordinances related to each incident.

Authorizes rather than requires a representative from a municipality where a pedestrian death has occurred to participate. Allows WTSC to invite a victim or a victim's family to participate.

Allows the council to provide grants to implement recommendations of the council if funding is appropriated for this specific purpose.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: PRO: From 2003–12 more than 47,000 people died while walking on our streets nationwide. In that same decade, 676,000 pedestrians were injured in our nation. Pedestrians here in Washington are also at risk. One of the focuses in Target Zero is how to reduce pedestrian deaths and injuries. The idea came from a stakeholder group to take a closer look at pedestrian fatalities and see if there are trends and possible systemic solutions. We don't look at the issue on a statewide basis. We've had great stakeholder input and the PSSB will address the fiscal note and implement a model that the WTSC has used to look at how to tackle impaired driving. I intend to make it a pilot program as well. I hope we can try to make our transportation system safer for all users.

Everybody walks at some point. I just read about a woman who was the 36th person in Clark County to be injured this year. Many communities face tragedies every year. Reducing pedestrian deaths and injuries by just 10 percent will save millions of dollars. This bill takes a multidiscipline approach. We must protect our most vulnerable users. These deaths and injuries are preventable.

OTHER: We are committed to stakeholder work and looking for gaps in the system and how do we fix them. We support bringing a stakeholder group together to use data we have is a great idea. Cities are excited about the idea, but have concerns about participating when there is a law suit.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Liias, prime sponsor; Lisa Quinn, Feet First, Executive Director.

OTHER: Shelly Baldwin, WTSC; Alison Hellberg, Assn. of WA Cities.