

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5957

As Amended by House, April 15, 2015

Title: An act relating to the pedestrian safety advisory council.

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 History:

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

Passed Senate: 3/09/15, 48-1.

Passed House: 4/15/15, 57-41.

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 Substitute Bill: 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, 2021.

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.

House Amendment(s): Requires that the Pedestrian Safety Advisory Council be convened and staffed within the amounts appropriated for the Washington Traffic Safety Commission.

Reduces the pilot from six to four years.

Expands the people that may serve on the Council to include local law enforcement who have investigated pedestrian fatalities, a traffic engineer. Limits municipal government representatives in jurisdictions that have had a pedestrian fatality to two representatives selected by the Council.

Clarifies the confidentiality requirements for information reviewed by the Council and prohibits Council members from testifying in a civil action related to matters the Council has reviewed.

Clarifies the types of materials that the Council may review.