

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5751

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Health Care, February 16, 2017

Title: An act relating to personnel requirements for municipal ambulance services.

Brief Description: Concerning personnel requirements for municipal ambulance services.

Sponsors: Senator Schoesler.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health Care: 2/14/17, 2/16/17 [DPS, w/oRec].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Authorizes persons without a first aid certificate to drive an ambulance under certain circumstances.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5751 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Rivers, Chair; Becker, Vice Chair; Cleveland, Ranking Minority Member; Kuderer, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Conway, Fain, Keiser, Miloscia, O'Ban and Walsh.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Mullet.

Staff: Evan Klein (786-7483)

Background: Ambulances. Ambulances are required to operate with sufficient personnel to care for patients, including at least one emergency medical technician (EMT). EMTs have responsibility for the operation of the ambulance and for the care of the patient. EMTs are persons certified by the Department of Health (DOH) to render emergency medical care or, under the responsible supervision and direction of an approved medical program director, to participate in a community assistance referral and education services program.

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 driver of the ambulance must have at least a certificate of first aid qualification, recognized by the Secretary of DOH, unless there are at least two EMTs in attendance of the patient, in which case the driver does not need a certificate.

Certificate of First Aid. DOH must recognize a current certificate of advanced first aid qualification by those who show proof of advanced Red Cross training or its equivalent. Red Cross courses teach participants how to respond to common emergencies, including burns, cuts, and head and neck injuries. They last from two to five hours and provide participants with a two-year certification.

Summary of Bill (First Substitute): With approval from DOH, an ambulance service established by a volunteer or municipal corporation, in a rural area, with insufficient personnel may use a driver without any medical or first aid training so long as the driver:

- is at least 17 years old;
- possesses a valid driver's license with no restrictions;
- is accompanied by a non-driving EMT; and
- does not provide any medical care to patients.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE (First Substitute):

- Allows for volunteer as well as municipal corporations to use drivers without first aid training, and specifies that this exception is only allowed in rural areas.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* OTHER: In volunteer districts, it is very hard to get volunteers with medical training. DOH can currently give variances to districts, but there is no long-term solution in place. This bill recognizes the realities of rural districts. It would be useful to expand the language from merely applying to Municipal Corporations to Volunteer or Municipal Corporations in a rural area. Rural areas without EMT or first responder training still need to be able to use their ambulances.

Persons Testifying: OTHER: Bob Berschauer, Washington Ambulance Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.