

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1901

As Passed House:
March 6, 2019

Title: An act relating to exemptions from the use of safety belts.

Brief Description: Clarifying the exemption from safety belt use for physical or medical reasons.

Sponsors: Representatives Lovick, Griffey and Orwall; by request of Washington State Patrol.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/27/19, 2/28/19 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/6/19, 97-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Prohibits operators and passengers of a commercial motor vehicle from exercising the current medical exception to the requirement to wear a safety belt.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 30 members: Representatives Fey, Chair; Slatter, 2nd Vice Chair; Valdez, 2nd Vice Chair; Wylie, 1st Vice Chair; Barkis, Ranking Minority Member; Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Young, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Boehnke, Chambers, Chapman, Dent, Doglio, Dufault, Entenman, Eslick, Goehner, Gregerson, Irwin, Kloba, Lovick, McCaslin, Mead, Orcutt, Ortiz-Self, Pellicciotti, Ramos, Riccelli, Shea, Shewmake and Van Werven.

Staff: Beth Redfield (786-7140).

Background:

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.

Generally under current law, every person 16 years of age or older operating or riding in a motor vehicle must wear a properly adjusted and securely fastened safety belt assembly. Violation of this law is a traffic infraction.

Some exceptions apply to the safety belt requirement. One current exception includes if an operator or passenger possesses written verification from a licensed physician that the person is unable to wear a safety belt for physical or medical reasons.

For purposes of the vehicle inspection code, a commercial motor vehicle is defined as a vehicle used on a highway in interstate or intrastate commerce to transport passengers or property, when the vehicle:

- has a gross vehicle weight rating or gross combination weight rating or gross weight or gross combination weight of 10,001 pounds or more;
- is designed or used to transport more than eight passengers, including the driver, for compensation;
- is designed or used to transport more than 15 passengers, including the driver, and is not used to transport passengers for compensation; or
- is used in transporting certain hazardous materials.

Summary of Bill:

Operators and passengers of a commercial motor vehicle are not eligible for the medical exception to the safety belt requirement.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This item came out of a 2017 review of federal rules and is a federal compliance issue. The Washington State Patrol was found to be out of compliance on a couple of laws and needs to get these bills to the finish line this year. If we remain out of compliance, \$6 million of federal funds that support trucking safety initiatives are at risk.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Lovick, prime sponsor; and Monica Alexander, Washington State Patrol.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.