

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2358

As Reported by House Committee On: Transportation

Title: An act relating to increasing mobility through the modification of stop sign requirements for bicyclists.

Brief Description: Increasing mobility through the modification of stop sign requirements for bicyclists.

Sponsors: Representatives Fitzgibbon, Irwin, Leavitt, Shewmake, Harris, Doglio and Kloba.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 1/22/20, 1/29/20 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Permits every bicyclist approaching a stop sign to follow the requirements for approaching a yield sign, with the exception of stop signs located at highway grade crossings of railroads and stop signs used by school buses.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 24 members: Representatives Fey, Chair; Wylie, 1st Vice Chair; Slatter, 2nd Vice Chair; Valdez, 2nd Vice Chair; Barkis, Ranking Minority Member; Young, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chapman, Doglio, Duerr, Dufault, Entenman, Gregerson, Irwin, Kloba, Lovick, Mead, Orcutt, Ortiz-Self, Paul, Ramos, Riccelli, Shewmake, Van Werven and Volz.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Walsh, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Boehnke, Chambers, Dent, Eslick, Goehner and McCaslin.

Staff: Jennifer Harris (786-7143).

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.

The driver of a vehicle approaching a stop sign is required to stop and yield the right-of-way to any vehicle in the intersection or approaching another roadway so closely as to constitute an immediate hazard.

All vehicles must stop at least 15 feet from the rail line where stop signs are located at highway grade crossings of railroads designated as particularly dangerous by the Washington State Department of Transportation or local authorities and may proceed only upon exercising due care. All vehicles must stop before reaching a school bus with a stop sign in use and may not proceed until the school bus stop sign is no longer activated.

The driver of a vehicle approaching a yield sign is required to slow down to a speed reasonable for the existing conditions, and if required for safety to stop, to stop and yield the right-of-way to any vehicle in the intersection or approaching another roadway so closely as to constitute an immediate hazard. If a driver subject to the yield sign does not stop and is involved in a collision with a vehicle in the intersection or junction of roadways, a presumption will be made that the driver failed to yield right-of-way as required.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Every bicyclist approaching a stop sign must either follow the requirements for approaching a stop sign or follow the requirements for approaching a yield sign. Every bicyclist must continue to follow the requirements for vehicles stopping at a stop sign located at a highway grade crossing of a railroad and for vehicles stopping for a school bus using a stop sign while it is activated.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill requires every bicyclist approaching a stop sign used by a school bus that has stopped on a roadway to follow the requirement that all vehicles must stop before reaching the school bus and may not proceed until the school bus stop sign is no longer activated.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect on October 1, 2020.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill would make a simple change to allow a person on a bicycle to yield the right of way without coming to a complete stop at an intersection. Idaho has had this law in place since 1982, and the data shows that injuries dropped by 14 percent the year after the law took effect and that the rate has remained steady since. Arkansas, Delaware, and Oregon

all recently passed similar laws. The evidence shows that this change would improve safety. Bicyclists know that they are the ones who will be most impacted if they are hit by a car.

A high number of Washington residents are interested in bicycling more, but they are concerned about safety. This is common sense legislation. Intersections are the most dangerous part of a bicyclist's trip, and this bill would allow bicyclists to have better control over their bicycles in intersections. Stopping and starting is the most difficult part of riding a bicycle, and this is when a bicycle is most likely to wobble, fall, or be ridden unpredictably.

The bill would help to reduce speed differences between vehicle types and would help bicyclists avoid close encounters with vehicles. It would also allow bicyclists to remain ahead of other traffic, avoiding sitting in the pocket next to a stop sign, which is a blind spot for drivers. Over one-half of serious injuries and fatalities are intersection related. Bicyclists operate smaller vehicles at a slower speed than motor vehicles and can easily hear noises in their surroundings and have a wider field of vision—this bill accommodates these differences.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Fitzgibbon, prime sponsor; Claire Martini; and Alex Alston, Washington Bikes.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.