

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1901

As of March 21, 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: Passed House: 3/06/19, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Transportation: 3/20/19.

Brief Summary of Bill

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

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Kelly Simpson (786-7403)

Background: Generally under current law, every person sixteen 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 inspections 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;

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- is designed or used to transport more than fifteen 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 operating a commercial motor vehicle are not eligible for the medical exception to the safety belt requirement.

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: PRO: This bill is needed to conform with federal law in order to ensure Washington State maintains certain commercial motor vehicle safety grants.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative John Lovick, Prime Sponsor; Monica Alexander, Washington State Patrol.

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