
HOUSE BILL 2358

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2024 Regular Session

By Representatives Barkis, Hackney, Robertson, Hutchins, Abbarno, Low, Walsh, Orcutt, Schmidt, Volz, Klicker, Goehner, Griffey, Corry, Chambers, Couture, Connors, Maycumber, Graham, Harris, McEntire, Caldier, McClintock, Wilcox, Eslick, Jacobsen, Mosbrucker, Chandler, Schmick, Dent, Christian, Sandlin, Waters, Cheney, Stokesbary, Steele, Barnard, Chapman, Leavitt, Bronoske, and Nance

Read first time 01/15/24. Referred to Committee on Community Safety, Justice, & Reentry.

1 AN ACT Relating to people intentionally obstructing highways;
2 adding a new section to chapter 46.61 RCW; creating a new section;
3 and prescribing penalties.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that people that
6 intentionally choose to block state highways without a permit create
7 a safety risk that may result in the loss of life. Such illegal
8 activities have resulted in death in the past that could have been
9 avoided. This act provides consequences for endangering people,
10 impeding emergency vehicles, and blocking the freedom of movement of
11 others. The legislature recognizes the right to peacefully assemble.
12 Endangering people's lives, the traveling public, and law enforcement
13 officers is not part of a civil society when there are plenty of
14 legal and safe times and locations for public discourse and
15 assemblies.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 46.61
17 RCW to read as follows:

18 (1) A person is guilty of obstructing highways if:

19 (a) The person, acting with three or more persons together,
20 intentionally obstructs vehicular traffic by walking, standing, or

1 sitting in a manner that blocks without lawful authority the ability
2 of a vehicle to drive on a state highway.

3 (b) Except as provided for in (c) of this subsection, obstructing
4 highways is a gross misdemeanor.

5 (c) It is a class C felony if a person is a leader or organizer
6 of the people engaging in obstructing highways and must pay a
7 monetary penalty of at least \$5,000, which may not be reduced to an
8 amount less than \$1,000.

9 (2) A person is guilty of obstructing highways in disregard for
10 public safety if:

11 (a)(i) A person, acting with three or more persons together,
12 intentionally obstructs vehicular traffic on a state highway by
13 walking, standing, or sitting without legal authority;

14 (ii) The person's activity creates a risk causing injury to any
15 person or property;

16 (iii) The person's activity impedes an ambulance; or

17 (iv) The person refuses or fails to disperse when ordered to do
18 so by a police officer or public official engaged in enforcing the
19 law.

20 (b) Obstructing highways in disregard for public safety is a
21 class C felony. A person found to have committed obstructing highways
22 in disregard for public safety is required to pay a penalty of at
23 least \$5,000, which may not be reduced to an amount of less than
24 \$1,000. Upon a finding that a person is subject to sentencing, the
25 court must impose a sentence of a minimum of 30 days.

26 (c) It is a class C felony if a person is a leader or organizer
27 of the people engaging in obstructing highways and is subject to a
28 monetary penalty of at least \$5,000, which may not be reduced to an
29 amount less than \$1,000. Upon a finding that a person is subject to
30 sentencing, the court shall impose a sentence of a minimum of 30
31 days.

32 (d) If a person has previously been convicted of a violation of
33 RCW 46.61.015, disorderly conduct pursuant to RCW 9A.84.030(1)(c),
34 failure to disperse pursuant to RCW 9A.84.020, obstructing highways,
35 obstructing highways in disregard for public safety, organizer or
36 leader of obstructing highways in disregard for public safety, or
37 similar criminal behavior from other jurisdictions, a court finding a
38 violation under this section shall impose a penalty of at least
39 \$6,125, which may not be reduced to an amount of less than \$1,000.

1 Upon a finding that a person is subject to sentencing under this
2 section, the court shall impose a sentence of a minimum of 60 days.

--- **END** ---