

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESB 5081

As Passed Senate, February 12, 2025

Title: An act relating to revising the provisions around unattended motor vehicles.

Brief Description: Revising the provisions around unattended motor vehicles.

Sponsors: Senators Fortunato, Christian, McCune and Wilson, J..

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/27/25, 1/30/25 [DP].

Floor Activity: Passed Senate: 2/12/25, 49-0.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- States that a motor vehicle left standing with an engine activated by a remote starter system is not considered an unattended vehicle under certain circumstances.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Lias, Chair; Lovick, Vice Chair; Ramos, Vice Chair; King, Ranking Member; Goehner, Assistant Ranking Member; Alvarado, Chapman, Christian, Cortes, Fortunato, Harris, Holy, Krishnadasan, MacEwen, Nobles, Shewmake and Wilson, J..

Staff: Kelly Simpson (786-7403)

Background: Under current law, motor vehicles may not be left unattended without first stopping the engine, locking the ignition, removing the key, and effectively setting the brake. When standing on any perceptible grade, the front wheels must be turned to the curb or side of the highway.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

A driver who has left a motor vehicle standing unattended and learns that the vehicle has become set in motion and has struck another vehicle or property, or has caused injury to any person, must (1) locate, or leave written notice for, the operator or owner of a stricken unattended vehicle or damaged property, providing the driver's name and address, or (2) remain at the scene, render aid, and share certain contact and insurance information, if the accident involves an injured person, or damage to an attended vehicle or other property.

Summary of Engrossed Bill: A standing motor vehicle with an engine activated by a remote starter system is not considered unattended if the vehicle is locked and the keys are not in the vehicle. However, the most recent driver of the motor vehicle is still subject to the rules around providing notice and rendering aid should the motor vehicle become set in motion and strikes another vehicle or property, or has caused injury to any person.

Remote starter system is defined as any device installed in a motor vehicle that allows the engine of the vehicle to be started by remote or radio control.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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 impacts many people who use remote starters to start their vehicles, for example on cold mornings to warm up the vehicles. This bill brings Washington State into line with most other states. And it exempts vehicles on the vehicle owner's property from the unattended vehicle law.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Phil Fortunato, Prime Sponsor.

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