
Transportation Committee

HB 1845

Brief Description: Requiring and funding driver training for all new first-time drivers.

Sponsors: Representatives Simpson, Lovick, B. Sullivan, Springer and Appleton.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires all first-time applicants for a driver's license to satisfactorily complete a traffic safety education course, regardless of age.
- Establishes a grant program to provide funds to low-income individuals in order to offset the cost of traffic safety education.
- Imposes a \$5 fee on every traffic infraction with the revenue generated designated to fund the cost of the grant program.

Hearing Date: 2/12/07

Staff: David Munnecke (786-7315).

Background:

In order to receive a driver's license, an applicant under the age of 18 must satisfactorily complete a traffic safety education course that meets the standards set by either the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, in the case of a program provided by a school district, or the Department of Licensing (DOL). The DOL may waive the traffic safety education requirement if the applicant can demonstrate that:

- he or she was unable to take or complete a traffic safety education course;
- a need exists for the applicant to operate a motor vehicle; and
- the applicant has the ability to operate a motor vehicle in such a manner so as not to jeopardize persons or property.

The DOL is responsible for overseeing the driver training school program. Driver training schools must meet standards set by DOL, which works with the Driver Instructors Advisory Committee to develop the curriculum for the driver training schools. As of June 2005, there were

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214 schools driver training schools in Washington, and almost 800 instructor applications had been processed by DOL.

Summary of Bill:

All first-time applicants for a driver's license are required to satisfactorily complete a traffic safety education course, regardless of age, unless the requirement is waived by the Department of Licensing.

A driver training grant program is established to provide funds to low-income individuals, in order to offset the cost of traffic safety education courses. The grant program is administered by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), which is directed to develop a sliding scale of grant amounts for individuals with household incomes at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level. The DSHS is also required to adjust the amount of the grants on a quarterly basis according to the funds available.

A \$5 fee is imposed on every traffic infraction, which cannot be reduced or waived. The revenue generated by this fee is designated to fund the driver training grant program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 9, 2007.

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