

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5469

As Passed House:

April 8, 2009

Title: An act relating to limitations on the use of intermediate licenses.

Brief Description: Modifying limitations on the use of intermediate licenses.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Parlette, Eide, Jarrett and McCaslin).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 3/16/09, 3/24/09 [DP].

Floor Activity

Passed House: 4/8/09, 95-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Limits the extension of the intermediate license restrictions for involvement in an accident to accidents involving only one motor vehicle, accidents where the intermediate drivers' license holder was cited in connection with the accident or found to have caused the accident, and accidents where no one was cited or found to have caused the accident.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 27 members: Representatives Clibborn, Chair; Lias, Vice Chair; Roach, Ranking Minority Member; Rodne, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Armstrong, Campbell, Cox, Driscoll, Eddy, Ericksen, Finn, Herrera, Johnson, Klippert, Kristiansen, Moeller, Morris, Rolfes, Sells, Shea, Simpson, Springer, Takko, Upthegrove, Wallace, Williams and Wood.

Staff: David Munnecke (786-7315)

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.

Washington's Intermediate Drivers' License (IDL) law prohibits drivers who hold an IDL from carrying passengers under 20 years of age in their car for the first six months after issuance of the license, unless the passenger is an immediate family member. During the remaining period of the IDL, up to the age of 18, the driver may not carry more than three non-family member passengers under the age of 20. Drivers who hold an IDL are also prohibited from driving between 1:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. unless a licensed driver 25 or older is also in the vehicle. These restrictions may only be enforced as secondary infractions.

Beginning with the issuance of the IDL and until the age of 18:

- If a driver commits a traffic infraction, violates any IDL license restrictions, or is involved in an accident, the driver is sent a warning letter by the Department of Licensing (DOL).
- If a second offense is committed, a letter suspending the driver for six months (or until age 18, whichever is shorter) is sent to the driver.
- For a third offense, the driver is suspended until age 18.
- The driver's parents also receive a copy of any warning or suspension letter sent to the driver.

After a year of driving safely without an infraction, violation, or accident, the IDL driving restrictions expire and will not be reimposed. However, the driver is still subject to receiving the IDL warning letter and license suspension penalties until age 18. Driving with a suspended IDL is a misdemeanor.

Summary of Bill:

The extension of the IDL restrictions for involvement in an accident is limited to:

- accidents involving only one motor vehicle;
- accidents where the IDL holder was cited in connection with the accident or found to have caused the accident; and
- accidents where no one was cited or found to have caused the accident.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Senator Eide is the co-sponsor of this bill, and the sponsor of the original IDL law. There is a great deal of ownership on this issue on the part of the original sponsor. Senator Eide is planning to work on this issue over the interim with a number of stakeholders and look much further into the issue. This bill should move forward in the manner in which it is currently drafted where the IDL holder will not be on probation if there is an accident and a ticket is given to another party to the accident.

It's unclear why there was a surge in complaints about this aspect of the IDL law this summer. It's possible that this has to do with increasing numbers of IDL holders on the road. It's clearly unfair and potentially a significant problem for a household when a teen driver has their intermediate license restrictions continued through no fault of their own and they thus cannot help with transporting themselves or others.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Parlette, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.