

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1006

As Reported By House Committee On:

Education

Title: An act relating to the definition of a school bus driver.

Brief Description: Defining school bus driver.

Sponsors: Representatives Carlson and Brumsickle.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/24/95, 1/31/95 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Brumsickle, Chair; Elliot, Vice Chair; Johnson, Vice Chair; Clements; Fuhrman; McMahan; Pelesky; Quall; Radcliff; Smith; Talcott; B. Thomas and Thompson.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Cole, Ranking Minority Member; Dickerson; G. Fisher and Veloria.

Staff: Robert Butts (786-7111).

Background: On March 19, 1993, the State Board of Education adopted new rules governing the transportation of school students. The new rules delineate two types of authorizations, dependent on the type of vehicle used to transport the student and the destination of the vehicle:

Type I is an authorization to operate a school bus or other motor vehicle for the purpose of transporting students to and from school routinely on scheduled routes and also transport students to school-related activities.

Type II is an authorization to operate a motor vehicle with a seating capacity of ten or fewer for the purpose of transporting students to and from school-related activities, but not on routinely scheduled routes between home and school. A Type II authorization is not needed for an employee who transports students in response to an emergency affecting health or safety.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A school bus driver is defined as a person who operates a school bus or other vehicle for the routine transportation of students to and from school on scheduled routes. This definition would preclude the State Board of Education from requiring the Type II authorization.

Effective September 1, 1996, school districts must have a policy on what qualifications are needed of employees and volunteers who transport students to school sponsored activities.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: A provision was added that requires school districts to have a policy regarding the transportation of students to school sponsored activities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The Type II license requirement is an unfunded mandate that reduces the amount of funds that can be used in the classroom. It has reduced school district flexibility and hurt extracurricular programs. This should be a local school district decision.

Testimony Against: The Type II driver's license increases student safety and reduces liability. Teachers and other school employees are not always good drivers, and the training they receive is useful. School districts must exercise the highest standard of care when it comes to the transportation of students. This is a safety issue: not a jobs issue.

Testified: Rep. Don Carlson, prime sponsor (pro); Dean Stenehjem, Washington State School for the Blind (pro); Bruce Gardner, Raymond School District (con); Claudia Otey, Kent School District (con); Les Coleman, White Pass School District (con); Donna Kinder, Franklin Pierce School District (con); Myrna Lance, North Thurston School District (con); Bonnie Miller, Griffin School District (con); Gary Johnston, parent (con); Candy Curl, State Board of Education (con); Don Carnahan, Superintendent of Public Instruction (con); Lynn McKinnon, Public School Employees (con); Jim Richardson, Hood Canal School District (con); Walt Linehan, North Thurston School District bus driver (con); Mike Ryherd, Jt. Council of Teamsters (con); Owen Linch, Teamsters (con); Randy Parr, Service Employees (con); Walter Ball, Association of Washington School Principals (pro); Dwayne Slate, Washington State School Directors' Association (pro); and Rich Leonard, Washington Federation of Teachers (con).