

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6684

As Reported By House Committee On:

Education
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to student safety to and from school.

Brief Description: Authorizing student transportation funding for students living within one mile of the school.

Sponsors: Senators McAuliffe, Johnson, Goings, Finkbeiner, Pelz, Rasmussen, Fairley, Hochstatter, Bauer and Winsley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/15/96, 2/23/96 [DPA];

Appropriations: 2/24/96 [DPA(APP w/o ED)s].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 16 members: Representatives Brumsickle, Chairman; Elliot, Vice Chairman; Johnson, Vice Chairman; Cole, Ranking Minority Member; Keiser, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Clements; Hatfield; Linville; McMahan; Pelesky; Quall; Radcliff; Smith; Talcott; B. Thomas and Veloria.

Staff: Robert Butts (786-7111).

Background: Each school district determines which students it will transport to and from school and what routes will be used to transport the students.

If a school district elects to provide student transportation, then the state allocates funds for student transportation based on the number of students who are eligible and who actually ride buses. Eligible students include certain students with disabilities, students whose route stops are more than one radius mile from school, and students whose route stops are less than one radius mile from school if their walking conditions qualify them for hazardous conditions transportation.

Money allocated by the state for student transportation must be spent for student transportation activities and cannot be used to mitigate hazardous walking conditions.

Summary of Amended Bill: The allocation formula for student transportation is changed. Instead of funding based on the existence of a hazardous walking condition existing for students living within one radius mile of school, funding is based on the number of students in grades kindergarten through five living within one radius mile of the school.

Funds allocated to school districts for students living within one mile of school can be spent to alleviate hazardous walking conditions. Actions to alleviate such conditions can include the use of crossing guards and bus transportation for students. Priority must be given to students in grades kindergarten through five.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: The amended bill eliminates warning signs, markings, sidewalks, overpasses, and wider shoulders from the definition of "transportation services" that may be funded with the proposed K-5 transportation allocation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 8, 1996.

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

Testimony For: School districts need additional flexibility in dealing with hazards on routes children use when walking to and from school.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Jean Ameluxen and Marcie Sender, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Barbara Mertens, Washington Association of School Administrators; and Dwayne Slate, Washington State School Directors' Association.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended by Committee on Appropriations and without amendment by Committee on Education. Signed by 26 members: Representatives Huff, Chairman; Clements, Vice Chairman; Pelesky, Vice Chairman; H. Sommers, Ranking Minority Member; Valle, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Brumsickle; Carlson; Cooke; Crouse; Dyer; Foreman; Grant; Hickel; Kessler; Lambert; Linville; McMorris; Poulsen; Reams; Rust; Sehlin; Sheahan; Silver; Smith; Talcott and Wolfe.

Staff: Jack Daray (786-7178).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee on Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee on Education: The Appropriations Committee amendment expands potential use of a school district's transportation services fund to include projects that will mitigate hazardous walking conditions for students living within one mile of school. The committee amendment also requires the bill to be referenced and funded in the supplemental budget for it to take effect.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 8, 1996.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void if not referenced in the supplemental budget.

Testimony For: None.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: None.