

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2259

As Amended by the Senate

Title: An act relating to issuing drivers' licenses.

Brief Description: Extending the term of drivers' licenses.

Sponsors: Representatives Murray, Hankins, Ogden, K. Schmidt, Fisher, Radcliff, Hatfield and Hurst.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 3/5/99 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/15/99, 87-9.

Senate Amended.

Passed Senate: 4/16/99, 35-12.

House (House refuses to concur)

Senate (Senate receded)

Senate Amended: 4/23/99, 34-12.

Brief Summary of Bill

- The term of the driver's license is extended from four years to six years.
- The driver's license fee is increased from \$3.50 for each year the license is effective to \$5.
- The total license fee is increased from \$14 for a four-year license to \$30 for a six-year license.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 25 members: Representatives Fisher, Democratic Co-Chair; K. Schmidt, Republican Co-Chair; Cooper, Democratic 1st Vice Chair; Edwards, Democratic 2nd Vice Chair; Erickson, Republican Vice Chair; Hankins, Republican Vice Chair; Buck; G. Chandler; Fortunato; Hatfield; Hurst; Lovick; Mielke; Mitchell; Morris; Murray; Ogden; Pflug; Radcliff; Romero; Schindler; Schual-Berke; Scott; Skinner and Wood.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative McDonald.

Staff: Paul Neal (786-7315).

Background:

Currently, Washington State driver's licenses, commercial driver's licenses, and driver's licenses containing motorcycle endorsements are valid for four years. The fee for both the initial and renewal driver's license is \$14 (or \$3.50 per year). An additional fee, not to exceed \$12 for each class (or \$3 per year), is required for the issuance or renewal of a commercial driver's license. Finally, an additional fee for the issuance of an initial or new category motorcycle endorsement is \$6 (or \$1.50 per year), and the subsequent renewal endorsement fee is \$14 (or \$3.50 per year).

The \$3.50 yearly fee for the driver's license was last increased in 1978. The revenue generated from the current fee is insufficient to cover the cost of all the functions of the driver's license program.

Summary of Bill:

Washington State driver's licenses, commercial driver's licenses, and driver's licenses containing motorcycle endorsements are valid for six years. The annual fee for driver's licenses is increased by \$1.50 per year. The fee for both the initial and renewal driver's license would be \$30 (or \$5 per year). An additional fee, not to exceed \$24 for each class (or \$4 per year), is required for the issuance or renewal of a commercial driver's license. An additional fee, not to exceed \$9 (or \$1.50 per year), is required for the issuance of an initial or new category motorcycle endorsement, and the subsequent renewal endorsement fee is not to exceed \$30 (or \$5 per year).

During the period from July 1, 2000 to July 1, 2006, the Department of Licensing, in order to evenly distribute the yearly renewal rate of licensed drivers, may issue or renew a driver's license for a period other than six years. As well, the department may extend by mail a license that has already been issued, in which case, the fee is \$5 for each year that the license is issued, renewed, or extended.

EFFECT OF SENATE AMENDMENT(S): The amended bill provides for a five-year license. The fee increases are at the same rate per year as the original bill except for the additional fee for the initial or new category motorcycle endorsement. This fee is raised from \$1.50 per year to \$2.00 per year.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on March 3, 1999.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2000.

Testimony For: Passage of the bill would mean people would renew their driver's license every six years instead of every four. This reduces the number of visits people need to make to the driver's licensing office, which reduces the number of people visiting the offices, which reduces the amount of time people need to spend waiting in line when they do go.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Fred Stephens, Department of Licensing; Judith Giniger, Department of Licensing; and Joe Johnston, Veteran's Legislative Committee.