

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 1212

PARTIAL VETO

C 199 L 99

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Extending certain drivers' licenses for out-of-state licensees.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Transportation (Originally sponsored by Representatives Eickmeyer, Clements, Mielke, Benson, Veloria, Haigh, O'Brien, Doumit, Murray, Anderson, Conway, Constantine, Fisher, Hatfield, Dunshee, H. Sommers and Kenney).

House Committee on Transportation
Senate Committee on Transportation

Background:

There is no provision for extending the term of a driver's license that expires while a person is outside the state. The only exception is for members of the military, whose driver's licenses remain in effect as long as they are on active duty.

Some persons who are outside the state find it difficult or impossible to return to the state to renew their license. Examples include dependents of military persons stationed overseas. In many cases, retaining a valid U.S. license is a requirement for being allowed to drive in the host country without having to undergo driver's education and testing in the foreign country.

The Department of Licensing (DOL) had an informal policy of granting license extensions or renewals in situations where persons were unable to return to the state before their license expired. The attorney general's office determined that the department did not have authority to grant those extensions or renewals. In response to attorney general advice, the department discontinued its practice effective September 1, 1998. Persons whose licenses have expired since that time have been unable to renew their licenses, with the result that they have lost the ability to drive in the host country.

Summary:

The exemption from driver's license renewal requirements currently enjoyed by members of the military is extended to spouses and dependents of military members. For persons who are not military spouses or dependents, the prior Department of Licensing (DOL) policy is codified, allowing the DOL to:

- extend the driver's license for persons who will be out of the state for 12 months or less after the expiration date; or
- renew the driver's license for persons who are out of the state for more than 12 months after the expiration date.

The DOL is authorized to charge an additional fee of \$5 for the service. These changes apply retroactively to persons whose licenses expired between the time that the DOL discontinued its policy and the effective date of the act. The statutory late renewal fee is waived for persons covered by the retroactive provisions of the act. If a person's license is extended or renewed while he or she is out-of-state, the person must go to a driver's license office for an eye exam within 60 days of his or her return to Washington.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 97 0
House 95 0 (House reconsidered)
Senate 45 0

Effective: May 7, 1999

Partial Veto Summary: The Governor vetoed section 2 of the act, thereby removing a duplicative requirement that driver's licenses renewed without a photo be labeled "not valid for identification purposes". The requirement is present elsewhere in statute, rendering the amendatory language in section 2 of the bill superfluous. The statute amended in section 2, RCW 46.20.116, was repealed by Chapter 6, laws of 1999. Leaving section 2 in the bill would have served no substantive purpose and would have left legislative intent with regard to RCW 46.20.116 unclear.