

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6467

As Passed House - Amended:

February 29, 2000

Title: An act relating to vehicle, vessel, and aircraft license fraud.

Brief Description: Reversing the 1999 license fraud law.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Goings, Haugen, Eide, Sellar and Winsley).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/22/00, 2/23/00 [DPA].

Floor Activity:

Passed House - Amended: 2/29/00, 97-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill (As Amended by House Committee)

- Restores vehicle licensing avoidance law that was amended by ESSB 5706 last year.
- Because of technical problems with ESSB 5706 and the fact that, with the passage of Initiative 695, vehicle license fraud is no longer as big an issue. The Washington State Patrol's license fraud task force is disbanded, and authority for license plate enforcement is returned to local law enforcement.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 26 members: Representatives Fisher, Democratic Co-Chair; Mitchell, Republican Co-Chair; Cooper, Democratic 1st Vice Chair; Edwards, Democratic 2nd Vice Chair; Ericksen, Republican Vice Chair; Hankins, Republican Vice Chair; G. Chandler; DeBolt; Fortunato; Haigh; Hatfield; Hurst; Lovick; McDonald; Mielke; Murray; Ogden; Pflug; Radcliff; Romero; Schindler; Schual-Berke; Scott; Skinner; Wood and Woods.

Staff: Paul Neal (786-7315).

Background:

In 1999, the Legislature decriminalized license fraud and enacted civil penalties for intentionally licensing a vehicle in another state. Individuals who license vehicles in another state to avoid paying Washington taxes or fees are liable for a minimum monetary penalty of \$1000 and a maximum penalty of \$10,000.

The Legislature also authorized the Washington State Patrol (WSP) to use an administrative process to enforce the civil penalties established for license fraud. As a result of establishing this process, local law enforcement officials no longer had the authority to issue citations for license fraud.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The specific administrative process for the WSP is eliminated. The criminal penalties for license fraud are reinstated. Intentionally registering a vehicle in another state to evade Washington taxes and fees constitutes a gross misdemeanor.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: ESSB 5706 was interpreted by some jurisdictions to take away local government authority to issue citations for license plate violations. The reduction in license tab fees by Initiative 695 takes away much of the incentive to fraudulently license cars in another state. Given this situation, restoring the law to its former state is a more appropriate way to address license plate violations.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: J. Sousley, Pierce County Sheriff's Department; and Eric Robertson, Washington State Patrol.