

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## ESHB 2675

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Transportation, February 24, 2000

**Title:** An act relating to child passenger restraint systems.

**Brief Description:** Updating requirements for child passenger restraint systems.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Skinner, Schual-Berke, Mitchell, Fisher, McDonald, Ruderman, O'Brien and Hurst).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 2/22/2000, 2/24/2000 [DPA].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Goings, Vice Chair; Costa, Eide, Jacobsen, Oke, Patterson, Prentice, Sheahan, Shin and Swecker.

**Staff:** Jennifer Ziegler (786-7316)

**Background:** Current law requires a child restraint system in an automobile for children under three and does not make distinct requirements based on weight.

Enforcement of seatbelt violations may only be accomplished as a secondary enforcement action when a driver of a motor vehicle has been detained for a suspected violation of traffic laws.

**Summary of Amended Bill:** The following changes are made to current law:

- Children under the age of 16 years must be restrained in a vehicle according to the following schedule:
  - One year of age or under or 20 pounds « a rear facing infant seat.
  - Between one year of age or over 20 pounds and four years of age, or under 40 pounds « a forward facing child safety seat.
  - Between four years of age or over 40 pounds and eight years of age or under 80 pounds « a booster seat.
  - Eight years of age and older « a seatbelt.
- The penalty for violations of the above age/weight based child seat requirements is a traffic infraction. If the person found to be in violation provides proof that he or she

purchased an approved child passenger restraint system within seven days of receiving the citation, the court shall dismiss the notice of infraction.

- For vehicles equipped with passenger-side air bags and the air bag system is activated, children under the age of eight or under 80 pounds must be transported in the back seat of the vehicle, when practical to do so.
- The enforcement of child restraint usage is made a primary action, but seatbelt enforcement is left as a secondary action.
- Law enforcement may do a visual inspection of the child restraint system in use to ensure that the system provides the maximum safety and security to each individual child. The enforcement requirement must be applied in conjunction with the specific weight/age criteria.
- The Washington Traffic Safety Commission must conduct an educational campaign on the use of child car seats, booster seats, and seatbelt use, based on the new provisions contained in this bill.

**Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:** Children between the ages of four and eight or between 40 and 80 pounds must be in a child booster seat. Children who are eight years old or older must wear a seatbelt. The effective date is changed to January 1, 2001.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect on January 1, 2001.

**Testimony For:** This bill will save lives. The intent of the bill is to educate citizens, not to punish them. Safety depends on adult knowledge and examples.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** PRO: Rep. Mary Skinner, co-prime sponsor; Rep. Shay Schual-Berke, co-prime sponsor; Steve Lind, Traffic Safety Commission.