

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5264

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As Passed Senate, March 5, 1999

**Title:** An act relating to requirements for operating a motorcycle on Washington highways.

**Brief Description:** Eliminating categories of motorcycle endorsement.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Horn and Hochstatter).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 1/26/99, 2/9/99 [DPS, DNP].  
Passed Senate, 3/5/99, 42-4.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5264 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Goings, Vice Chair; Costa, Eide, Heavey, Horn, Jacobsen, Johnson, Oke, Patterson, Prentice, Sellar, Sheahan, T. Sheldon and Shin.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Benton.

**Staff:** Kelly Simpson (786-7305)

**Background:** In order to drive a motorcycle on Washington highways a person must first hold a valid driver's license and then obtain one of three types of motorcycle endorsements. The different types of special motorcycle endorsements are determined by the engine displacement (or size) of the motorcycle. In order to obtain the endorsement, a driver must pass a motorcycle endorsement examination conducted by the Department of Licensing (DOL). Under current law, there are two ways to prepare for that examination: (1) a DOL sponsored motorcycle training class; and (2) a restricted motorcycle learner's permit that requires the learner to be under the visual supervision of an experienced motorcyclist. Once licensed, motorcyclists are exempt from the mandatory liability insurance law.

**Summary of Bill:** A motorcycle endorsement authorizes the holder to operate any size motorcycle. The Department of Licensing may waive the endorsement examination for persons who pass the department's class. Those motorcyclists holding a motorcycle learner's permit are allowed to drive on a controlled, limited access facility, and without visual supervision. Motorcyclists must carry liability insurance in the following minimum amounts of coverage: (1) \$10,000 property damage, (2) \$25,000 for personal injury to or death of one person in any one accident, and (3) \$50,000 for personal injury to or death of two or more persons in any one accident.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 21, 1999.

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

**Testimony For:** Studies show that single category– motorcycle endorsements do not negatively affect public safety. Requiring motorcyclists to obtain financial responsibility closes a loophole in current law by preventing at-risk drivers from operating a motorcycle without first obtaining some form of insurance.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** PRO: Senator Horn, prime sponsor; Karen York; Lynda Henriksen, DOL; Gary Sorensen, Puget Sound Motorcycle Education Assn.; Clark Sitzes, Allstate Insurance, (concerns with Section 6).