

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESSB 6264

As Passed Senate, February 10, 2000

Title: An act relating to intermediate drivers' licenses.

Brief Description: Establishing intermediate drivers' licenses.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Eide, Costa, Swecker, Gardner, Kohl-Welles, Shin, Patterson, Brown, Haugen, Jacobsen, McAuliffe, Sheahan, Rasmussen, Fairley, Goings and Franklin).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/18/2000, 1/26/2000 [DPS].
Passed Senate, 2/10/2000, 43-5.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6264 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Jennifer Ziegler (786-7316)

Background: A Washington resident under the age of 18 is eligible for an unrestricted driver's license if the parent or guardian signs the application and the applicant has completed an approved driver's education course.

Graduated driver's licensing is a system of three phases of licensing that a driver under the age of 18 must progress through in order to qualify for a driver's license.

Currently, 34 states have adopted legislation that restricts teen driving and 22 states have adopted a full graduated driver's licensing system.

Summary of Bill: The Legislature recognizes the need to develop a graduated driver's licensing system.

An intermediate driver's license is established.

Intermediate License Requirements: An applicant for an intermediate driver's license must have possessed a learner's permit for six months, passed a road test, passed a driver's education course, and certified to DOL that the applicant has at least 50 hours of supervised driving experience and that ten of those hours were at night.

Intermediate License Restrictions: For the first six months after issuance of an intermediate license, the holder of the license may not have any passengers in the car under the age of 20, who are not members of the holder's immediate family. After the first six months, the holder may not have more than three passengers in the car under the age of 20, who are not members of the holder's immediate family.

The holder of an intermediate driver's license may not operate a vehicle between the hours of 12 a.m. and 5 a.m. except when the holder is accompanied by a parent or guardian, the holder is driving between home and work, the holder is driving between home and a school event, the holder is driving for employment purposes, or the holder is moving a vehicle for agricultural purposes. These restrictions do not apply when there is an emergency or the driver has written permission from the parent.

Intermediate License Penalties: The first time a person issued an intermediate driver's license is convicted of or found to have committed a traffic offense, DOL must mail a letter to the person's parent or guardian indicating the potential future penalties. On a second conviction or finding, DOL must suspend the intermediate license for six months, and on a third conviction or finding, DOL must suspend the intermediate license until the person turns 18. Enforcement of intermediate violations may only be accomplished as a secondary action.

DOL must issue an instruction permit and an intermediate license in distinctive forms.

A driver's license issued to a person under the age of 18 is an intermediate license subject to the restrictions accompanying intermediate licenses.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Statistics indicate that young drivers have a higher rate of crashes, particularly at the age of 16. It only makes sense to phase in driving privileges over time. Studies in Florida, Nova Scotia, Ontario and Michigan indicate an effectiveness of 9 percent to 34 percent for graduated driver's licensing programs. This legislation is a simple and effective way to save lives.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Senator Eide, prime sponsor; Senator Shin, Steve Lind, Traffic Safety Commission; Dr. Alan Williams, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety; Lindsey Harsin, Stop Auto Fatalities Through Youth Efforts (SAFTYE); Janet Ray, AAA Washington; Karen Norton, WA Traffic Safety Education Assn.; Susie Tracy, WA State Medical Assn., American Medical Response Assn.; Captain Eric Robertson, WA State Patrol; Ken Kanikeberg, OSPI; Clark Holloway, Dept. of Licensing; Sue McDonald; Barbara Casey, WA State PTA; Deanne Kopkas, National Assn. of Independent Insurers.

House Amendment(s): Exceptions to driving restrictions are eliminated. An intermediate licensee may drive at any time without restrictions if the licensee is not involved in an accident

and does not receive an infraction within 12 months of issuance of the license. The law sunsets on June 30, 2009.