

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6389

As Passed House:

March 5, 2002

Title: An act relating to the ability to place the United States flag on school district buses.

Brief Description: Authorizing placement of United States flags on school buses.

Sponsors: By Senate Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Senators Benton, McAuliffe, Hewitt, Swecker, Roach, Morton, Haugen, Long, Stevens, McCaslin, Johnson, Snyder, Honeyford, Sheahan, Rossi, Rasmussen, Eide, Hale and Oke).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/26/02, 2/27/02 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/5/02, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to adopt rules that allow the safe display of American flags on school buses.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; Haigh, Vice Chair; Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Cox, McDermott, Rockefeller, Santos, Schindler, Schmidt and Upthegrove.

Staff: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background:

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) has the authority to adopt and enforce rules governing the marking of school buses. Current rules specify the color, and limit the signs and markings that may be exhibited on the exterior and interior of school buses. The rules do not permit the display of flags.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The SPI must adopt rules that permit the display of the United States flag on all school buses. The rules must address the size and placement of the flag so that it does not interfere with the safe operation of the school bus.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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

Testimony For: The SPI rules in place on September 11, 2001 did not permit school bus drivers to show their patriotism and love for this country by displaying a decal of an American flag. They also do not permit buses to display student artwork or other forms of individuality. School bus drivers want to show their support for our country in ways that are safe and unobtrusive. This legislation will permit them that latitude while preserving SPI's role in protecting student safety.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Benton, prime sponsor; Dan Laxson, Evergreen School District, Fishens Community Grange and, Public School Employees of Washington; Glenn Gorton, Public School Employees of Washington; and Greg Williamson, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.