

***Transportation Committee***

***HB 1460***

***Brief Description:*** *Enforcing seat belt laws as a primary action.*

***Sponsors:*** *Representatives Lovick, Jarrett, Hurst, Jackley, Cooper, Fisher, Edmonds, Morell, Ahern, Ogden, Simpson, O'Brien, Darneille, Kagi and Ruderman.*

***Brief Summary of Bill***

- *Seat belts laws are enforced as a primary action.*

***Hearing Date:*** *2/26/01*

***Staff:*** *Penny Nerup (786-7335).*

***Background:***

*In a radio address in 1996, then President Clinton asked all Americans to always wear seat belts as a first line of defense against traffic injuries and fatalities. In 1997 President Clinton directed the Secretary of Transportation to prepare a plan to increase the use of seat belts nationwide. The President directed the secretary to work with congress, the states, and other concerned groups, including the automobile and insurance industries and safety and consumer groups, to develop the plan. The plan was to address three areas: 1) state laws that require the use of seat belts; 2) assistance from the Department of Transportation to improve these state laws; and 3) a comprehensive education campaign by the public and private sectors to help the public understand the need to wear seat belts. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) was directed to be the lead agency in implementing the plan.*

*One of the areas of the NHTSA implementation plan was to conduct active, high-visibility enforcement of seat belt laws to achieve higher seat belt use rates. The NHTSA believes that seat belt use laws need to be enforced in the same manner as other traffic infractions, such as speeding or running a red light.*

*Except for those laws specific to children under 16 years of age, Washington's seat belt*

*laws are a secondary action, meaning that an infraction can only be written after the officer stops the vehicle for another traffic infraction. Safety belt use laws are the only laws in America that make a distinction between primary (also known as standard enforcement-) and secondary enforcement. Less than half the states currently have primary enforcement of seat belt laws.*

***Summary of Bill:***

*Violation of the use of seat belt laws is enforced as a primary action.*

***Appropriation:*** *None.*

***Fiscal Note:*** *Not Requested.*

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