

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5116

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Education*

Title: An act relating to transportation safety.

Brief Description: Allowing school bus drivers to report violators.

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Education (originally sponsored by Senators Murray, Bailey, Thorsness, Gaspard, A. Smith, Rinehart, Madsen, Talmadge, Bauer and Erwin; by request of Task Force on Student Transportation Safety).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Education, March 28, 1991, DPA.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION**

Majority Report: *Do pass as amended.* Signed by 15 members: Representatives Peery, Chair; G. Fisher, Vice Chair; Brough, Ranking Minority Member; Vance, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Betrozoff; Broback; Brumsickle; Cole; P. Johnson; Jones; Neher; Phillips; Rasmussen; H. Sommers; and Valle.

Staff: Susan Kirkpatrick (786-7291).

Background: The Task Force on Student Transportation Safety was established in 1989 to develop recommendations for reducing the dangers that children face as they travel to and from school. One of its recommendations is to reduce violations of the school bus stop law.

At this time, school bus drivers file a report of a violation with a law enforcement agency if they observe a violation. School bus drivers have complained that the reports are often not pursued by the law enforcement agency. If they are pursued, often the law enforcement agency can not prosecute because the school bus driver is unable to identify the driver. In those cases, the law enforcement agency sends a letter to the owner of the vehicle.

Summary of Amended Bill: If school bus drivers decide to report a school bus stop law violation, they must make a report to a law enforcement agency within 72 hours after the

violation occurred and the report must include the time and location at which the violation occurred, the vehicle license plate number, and the description of the vehicle involved in the violation. Law enforcement officers must initiate an investigation of the reported violation within 10 working days after receiving the report by contacting the owner of the vehicle involved in the violation and asking the owner to identify the driver of the vehicle at the time of the violation. The owner is required to identify the driver unless the owner believes the information is self-incriminating. If the investigating officer is able to identify the driver and has reasonable cause to believe a violation has occurred, the law enforcement officer must issue a citation. Failure to investigate within the 10 working day period does not prohibit further investigation or prosecution.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), in cooperation with at least one school district, is required to conduct a pilot program to test the feasibility of using video cameras to identify motorists and vehicles that commit school bus stop violations. Its findings are required to be reported to the Legislature by December 30, 1992.

SPI is required to review the current use of aides on special education buses and provide guidelines, with associated fiscal impacts, to the education committees of the House and Senate for increasing the use of aides on special education buses.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The provision requiring SPI to review the current use of aides on special education buses and to provide guidelines for increasing the use of aides on special education buses was added and the appropriation was removed.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Appropriation: Removed.

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

Testimony For: This bill is one of the things we can do to make transportation safer for our kids. It is important that the video camera pilot project be included. The video camera pilot project will help in prosecutions. Bus drivers do not have the opportunity to correctly identify the make and license plate of the car committing the bus stop law violation because the primary concern of the bus driver is the safety of the children and it is difficult to watch other cars. Also, drivers do not pay attention now but if

they know that they might be on camera, they may be more careful. The provision regarding the video camera project establishes a pilot project to see if they work and is not intended to be a requirement to provide all buses with them.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Senator Murray, prime sponsor; Don Carnahan, Superintendent of Public Instruction; Martha Shreve, school bus driver; and Tony Vivenzio, S.E.I.U.