H-0387.3

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**HOUSE BILL 2085**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2015 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Goodman and Ryu

AN ACT Relating to providing alternatives for penalties stemming from traffic infractions; amending RCW 46.63.060, 46.63.110, and 46.63.120; adding a new section to chapter 46.04 RCW; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that many people have difficulty satisfying civil penalties stemming from traffic infractions. Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to encourage satisfaction of such penalties by providing alternatives. It is the intent of the legislature to increase the number of people who pay their traffic tickets through payment in full, through a payment plan, or through a community restitution plan. Furthermore, the legislature finds that expanding the ability of all persons to satisfy the penalties stemming from traffic infractions will increase the likelihood that a person facing a traffic infraction will appear for court, thus encouraging greater respect for judicial institutions, as well as decreasing cases of failure to appear and failure to pay.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 46.04 RCW to read as follows:

"Community restitution" means the performance of a number of hours of community service in lieu of all or part of a monetary penalty, at the rate of the then state minimum wage per hour.

**Sec.**  RCW 46.63.060 and 2013 c 170 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) A notice of traffic infraction represents a determination that an infraction has been committed. The determination will be final unless contested as provided in this chapter.

(2) The form for the notice of traffic infraction shall be prescribed by rule of the supreme court and shall include the following:

(a) A statement that the notice represents a determination that a traffic infraction has been committed by the person named in the notice and that the determination shall be final unless contested as provided in this chapter;

(b) A statement that a traffic infraction is a noncriminal offense for which imprisonment may not be imposed as a sanction; that the penalty for a traffic infraction may include sanctions against the person's driver's license including suspension, revocation, or denial; that the penalty for a traffic infraction related to standing, stopping, or parking may include nonrenewal of the vehicle registration;

(c) A statement of the specific traffic infraction for which the notice was issued;

(d) A statement of the monetary penalty established for the traffic infraction;

(e) A statement of the options provided in this chapter for responding to the notice and the procedures necessary to exercise these options;

(f) A statement that at any hearing to contest the determination the state has the burden of proving, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the infraction was committed; and that the person may subpoena witnesses including the officer who issued the notice of infraction;

(g) A statement that at any hearing requested for the purpose of explaining mitigating circumstances surrounding the commission of the infraction the person will be deemed to have committed the infraction and may not subpoena witnesses;

(h) A statement that the person must respond to the notice as provided in this chapter within fifteen days or the person's driver's license or driving privilege may be suspended by the department until any penalties imposed pursuant to this chapter have been satisfied; and

(i) A statement that failure to appear at a hearing requested for the purpose of contesting the determination or for the purpose of explaining mitigating circumstances may result in the suspension of the person's driver's license or driving privilege, or in the case of a standing, stopping, or parking violation, refusal of the department to renew the vehicle registration, until any penalties imposed pursuant to this chapter have been satisfied.

(3)(a) A form for a notice of traffic infraction printed after ((~~July 22, 2011~~)) June 1, 2015, must include a statement that the person ((~~may~~)) shall be able to ((~~enter~~)) request entry into a payment plan or community restitution plan with the court under RCW 7.80.130 or 46.63.110.

(b) The forms for a notice of traffic infraction must include the changes in section 1, chapter 170, Laws of 2013 by July 1, 2015.

**Sec.**  RCW 46.63.110 and 2012 c 82 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) A person found to have committed a traffic infraction shall be assessed a monetary penalty. No penalty may exceed two hundred and fifty dollars for each offense unless authorized by this chapter or title.

(2) The monetary penalty for a violation of (a) RCW 46.55.105(2) is two hundred fifty dollars for each offense; (b) RCW 46.61.210(1) is five hundred dollars for each offense. No penalty assessed under this subsection (2) may be reduced.

(3) The supreme court shall prescribe by rule a schedule of monetary penalties for designated traffic infractions. This rule shall also specify the conditions under which local courts may exercise discretion in assessing fines and penalties for traffic infractions. The legislature respectfully requests the supreme court to adjust this schedule every two years for inflation.

(4) There shall be a penalty of twenty-five dollars for failure to respond to a notice of traffic infraction except where the infraction relates to parking as defined by local law, ordinance, regulation, or resolution or failure to pay a monetary penalty imposed pursuant to this chapter. A local legislative body may set a monetary penalty not to exceed twenty-five dollars for failure to respond to a notice of traffic infraction relating to parking as defined by local law, ordinance, regulation, or resolution. The local court, whether a municipal, police, or district court, shall impose the monetary penalty set by the local legislative body.

(5) Monetary penalties provided for in chapter 46.70 RCW which are civil in nature and penalties which may be assessed for violations of chapter 46.44 RCW relating to size, weight, and load of motor vehicles are not subject to the limitation on the amount of monetary penalties which may be imposed pursuant to this chapter.

(6) Whenever a monetary penalty, fee, cost, assessment, or other monetary obligation is imposed by a court under this chapter, it is immediately payable and is enforceable as a civil judgment under Title 6 RCW. If the court determines, in its discretion, that a person is not able to pay a monetary obligation in full because he or she is indigent, as defined in RCW 10.101.010, and not more than one year has passed since the later of July 1, 2005, or the date the monetary obligation initially became due and payable, the court shall, upon request of the person, enter into a payment plan or, if the person is otherwise eligible, a community restitution plan with the person, unless the person has previously been granted a payment plan or a community restitution plan with respect to the same monetary obligation, or unless the person is in noncompliance of any existing or prior payment plan or a community restitution plan, in which case the court may, at its discretion, implement a payment plan or a community restitution plan. If the court has notified the department that the person has failed to pay or comply and the person has subsequently entered into a payment plan and made an initial payment or entered into a community restitution plan and begun performance of the community restitution plan, the court shall timely notify the department that the infraction has been adjudicated, and the department shall immediately rescind any suspension of the person's driver's license or driver's privilege based on failure to respond to that infraction. "Payment plan," as used in this section, means a plan that requires reasonable payments based on the financial ability of the person to pay. The person may voluntarily pay an amount at any time in addition to the payments required under the payment plan.

(a) If a payment required to be made under the payment plan is delinquent or the person fails to complete a community restitution program on or before the time established under the payment plan, unless the court determines good cause therefor and adjusts the payment plan or the community restitution plan accordingly, the court may refer the unpaid monetary penalty, fee, cost, assessment, or other monetary obligation for civil enforcement until all monetary obligations, including those imposed under subsections (3) and (4) of this section, have been paid, and court authorized community restitution has been completed, or until the court has entered into a new time payment or community restitution agreement with the person. For those infractions subject to suspension under RCW 46.20.289, the court shall notify the department of the person's failure to meet the conditions of the plan, and the department shall suspend the person's driver's license or driving privileges.

(b) If a person has not entered into a payment plan or a community restitution plan with the court and has not paid or satisfied the ((~~monetary~~)) obligation in full on or before the time established for payment or satisfaction under a community restitution plan, the court may refer the unpaid monetary penalty, fee, cost, assessment, or other monetary obligation to a collections agency until all monetary obligations have been paid, including those imposed under subsections (3) and (4) of this section, or until the person has entered into a payment plan or a community restitution plan under this section. For those infractions subject to suspension under RCW 46.20.289, the court shall notify the department of the person's delinquency, and the department shall suspend the person's driver's license or driving privileges.

(c) If the payment plan is to be administered by the court, the court may assess the person a reasonable administrative fee to be wholly retained by the city or county with jurisdiction. The administrative fee shall not exceed ten dollars per infraction or twenty-five dollars per payment plan, whichever is less.

(d) Nothing in this section precludes a court from contracting with outside entities to administer its payment plan system. When outside entities are used for the administration of a payment plan, the court may assess the person a reasonable fee for such administrative services, which fee may be calculated on a periodic, percentage, or other basis.

(e) If a court authorized community restitution program for offenders is available in the jurisdiction, the court ((~~may~~)) shall allow conversion of all or part of the monetary obligations due under this section to court authorized community restitution in lieu of time payments if the person is ((~~unable to make reasonable time payments~~)) otherwise eligible to participate in community restitution and the person is indigent, as defined in RCW 10.101.010.

(7) In addition to any other penalties imposed under this section and not subject to the limitation of subsection (1) of this section, a person found to have committed a traffic infraction shall be assessed:

(a) A fee of five dollars per infraction. Under no circumstances shall this fee be reduced or waived. Revenue from this fee shall be forwarded to the state treasurer for deposit in the emergency medical services and trauma care system trust account under RCW 70.168.040;

(b) A fee of ten dollars per infraction. Under no circumstances shall this fee be reduced or waived. Revenue from this fee shall be forwarded to the state treasurer for deposit in the Washington auto theft prevention authority account; and

(c) A fee of two dollars per infraction. Revenue from this fee shall be forwarded to the state treasurer for deposit in the traumatic brain injury account established in RCW 74.31.060.

(8)(a) In addition to any other penalties imposed under this section and not subject to the limitation of subsection (1) of this section, a person found to have committed a traffic infraction other than of RCW 46.61.527 or 46.61.212 shall be assessed an additional penalty of twenty dollars. The court may not reduce, waive, or suspend the additional penalty unless the court finds the ((~~offender~~)) person to be indigent, as defined in RCW 10.101.010. If a court ((~~authorized~~)) authorizes entry into a community restitution program ((~~for offenders is available in the jurisdiction~~)), the court shall allow ((~~offenders to~~)) persons an offset of all or a part of the penalty due under this subsection (8) ((~~by~~)) through participation in the court authorized community restitution program if the person is otherwise eligible to participate in community restitution.

(b) Eight dollars and fifty cents of the additional penalty under (a) of this subsection shall be remitted to the state treasurer. The remaining revenue from the additional penalty must be remitted under chapters 2.08, 3.46, 3.50, 3.62, 10.82, and 35.20 RCW. Money remitted under this subsection to the state treasurer must be deposited in the state general fund. The balance of the revenue received by the county or city treasurer under this subsection must be deposited into the county or city current expense fund. Moneys retained by the city or county under this subsection shall constitute reimbursement for any liabilities under RCW 43.135.060.

(9) If a legal proceeding, such as garnishment, has commenced to collect any delinquent amount owed by the person for any penalty imposed by the court under this section, the court may, at its discretion, enter into a payment plan or community restitution plan.

(10) The monetary penalty for violating RCW 46.37.395 is: (a) Two hundred fifty dollars for the first violation; (b) five hundred dollars for the second violation; and (c) seven hundred fifty dollars for each violation thereafter.

**Sec.**  RCW 46.63.120 and 2002 c 175 s 37 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) An order entered after the receipt of a response which does not contest the determination, or after it has been established at a hearing that the infraction was committed, or after a hearing for the purpose of explaining mitigating circumstances is civil in nature.

(2) The court may include in the order the imposition of any penalty authorized by the provisions of this chapter for the commission of an infraction. The court may, in its discretion, waive, reduce, or suspend the monetary penalty prescribed for the infraction. At the person's request the court may order performance of a number of hours of community restitution in lieu of all or part of a monetary penalty, at the rate of the then state minimum wage per hour.

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