

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HB 1901

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Transportation, March 20, 2019

**Title:** An act relating to exemptions from the use of safety belts.

**Brief Description:** Clarifying the exemption from safety belt use for physical or medical reasons.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Lovick, Griffey and Orwall; by request of Washington State Patrol.

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/06/19, 97-0.

**Committee Activity:** Transportation: 3/20/19, 3/20/19 [DP].

### Brief Summary of Bill

- Prohibits operators and passengers operating a commercial motor vehicle from exercising the current medical exception to the requirement to wear a safety belt.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Hobbs, Chair; Saldaña, Vice Chair; King, Ranking Member; Cleveland, Das, Fortunato, Lovelett, Nguyen, O'Ban, Padden, Takko, Wilson, C. and Zeiger.

**Staff:** Kelly Simpson (786-7403)

**Background:** Generally under current law, every person sixteen years of age or older operating or riding in a motor vehicle must wear a properly adjusted and securely fastened safety belt assembly. Violation of this law is a traffic infraction.

Some exceptions apply to the safety belt requirement. One current exception includes if an operator or passenger possesses written verification from a licensed physician that the person is unable to wear a safety belt for physical or medical reasons.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

For purposes of the vehicle inspections code, a commercial motor vehicle is defined as a vehicle used on a highway in interstate or intrastate commerce to transport passengers or property, when the vehicle:

- has a gross vehicle weight rating or gross combination weight rating or gross weight or gross combination weight of 10,001 pounds or more;
- is designed or used to transport more than eight passengers, including the driver, for compensation;
- is designed or used to transport more than fifteen passengers, including the driver, and is not used to transport passengers for compensation; or
- is used in transporting certain hazardous materials.

**Summary of Bill:** Operators and passengers operating a commercial motor vehicle are not eligible for the medical exception to the safety belt requirement.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This bill is needed to conform with federal law in order to ensure Washington State maintains certain commercial motor vehicle safety grants.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative John Lovick, Prime Sponsor; Monica Alexander, Washington State Patrol.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.