

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6208

As Passed Senate, February 12, 2020

Title: An act relating to increasing mobility through the modification of stop sign requirements for bicyclists.

Brief Description: Increasing mobility through the modification of stop sign requirements for bicyclists.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Billig, Rivers, Liias, Randall and Wilson, C.).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/21/20, 2/03/20 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed Senate: 2/12/20, 44-1.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authorizes a person operating a bicycle to treat a stop sign as a yield sign.
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SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6208 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Kim Johnson (786-7472)

Background: Drivers of vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians must obey a traffic control device.

Every driver of a vehicle approaching a stop sign must stop.

A driver of a vehicle approaching a yield sign must slow to a speed reasonable for the conditions, and if required for safety come to a stop, and then after slowing or stopping, the

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driver must yield the right-of-way to any vehicle in the intersection or approaching on another roadway so closely as to constitute an immediate hazard. If a driver is involved in a collision with another vehicle in an intersection or junction of roadways, after driving past a yield sign without stopping, the collision must be deemed prima facie evidence of the driver's failure to yield right-of-way.

There are at least four other states and some municipalities that have adopted a law allowing bicyclists to treat a stop sign as a yield sign. This movement is often referred to as a rolling stop.

Summary of First Substitute Bill: A person operating a bicycle approaching a stop sign must either stop, or follow the requirements for approaching a yield sign.

The provision allowing a person operating a bicycle to treat a stop sign as a yield sign is not applicable to:

- a stop sign at a rail road crossing; and
- a stop signal displayed by a school bus, when the rules of the road require an approaching vehicle to stop.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on October 1, 2020.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: There is a lot to like in this bill, but what made me like it even more was the very different states that have all adopted this policy. Arkansas, Delaware, Idaho, and Oregon do not usually align on state policy, but they did see the merit of the policy for bicyclists being proposed in this bill. This really is an intuitive change. Allowing cyclists to keep some of their momentum increases safety and traffic flow. Bicyclists usually stop off to the right at a stop sign, which puts them in a blind spot for some motorists. It is the bicyclist's responsibility to yield if a vehicle is in the intersection or fast approaching the intersection, and this bill will not change that responsibility. The advocates worked hard over the interim, engaging the State Patrol and the Washington Traffic Safety Commission.

Biking is a regular form of transportation for me. The safety stop proposed in the bill is important for me because it is safer and more intuitive. Stopping and starting is the hardest and most vulnerable time for bicyclists. This helps reduce the speed difference between me and the cars around me, and when the car does overtake me, I am out of the intersection which removes some unpredictability and traffic. I prefer to plan my routes so I travel in protected bike lanes or on roads with less vehicle traffic. We have also learned a great deal from other state experiences. Bicyclist's injuries declined in Idaho after passage of this law. This legalizes typical behavior.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Andy Billig, Prime Sponsor; Claire Martini, citizen; Alex Alston, Washington Bikes.

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