

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5603

As of February 7, 2023

Title: An act relating to requiring driver training curriculum to include instruction on sharing the road with large vehicles, including commercial motor vehicles and buses.

Brief Description: Requiring driver training curriculum to include instruction on sharing the road with large vehicles, including commercial motor vehicles and buses.

Sponsors: Senators Valdez, Holy, Dozier, Hasegawa, Lovick, Nguyen and Wilson, C..

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/07/23.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Adds commercial vehicle, bus, and other large vehicle awareness to the required curriculum for driver training schools and school districts providing a traffic safety education program.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Brandon Popovac (786-7465)

Background: The Department of Licensing (DOL) requires individuals under the age of 18 to obtain an instruction permit and to complete a driver training education course to be eligible to obtain an intermediate driver's license. These requirements do not apply to individuals aged 18 or older.

Private driver training schools and some school districts offer driver training education courses.

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and DOL are required to jointly develop and maintain a required curriculum for school districts and approved private

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schools operating a traffic safety education program. The required curriculum for driver training schools and school districts providing a traffic safety education program must include the following information:

- the safe, lawful, and responsible operation of motor vehicles;
- intermediate driver's license issuance;
- passenger and driving restrictions, and sanctions for violating these restrictions;
- the effect of traffic violations and collisions on driving privileges;
- the effects of alcohol and drug use on motor vehicle operators;
- motorcycle awareness;
- bicycle safety;
- pedestrian safety;
- proper use of the left-hand lane by motor vehicles on multilane highways; and
- bicyclists' and pedestrians' rights and responsibilities and suggested riding procedures in common traffic situations.

Summary of Bill: Commercial vehicle, bus, and other large vehicle awareness is added to the required curriculum for driver training schools and school districts providing a traffic safety education program to ensure instruction in the importance of sharing the road with such vehicles.

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: Over last five years, the number of accidents and crashes involving commercial vehicles has increased over 7 percent, with crashes resulting in fatalities increasing over 40 percent. This is an important traffic safety bill that ensures everyone can get home safely. Recent data shows educating younger drivers is beneficial. The required curriculum should have been updated with this addition a long time ago. Most commercial vehicle crashes involve a passenger vehicle, with passenger vehicle drivers at fault 79 percent of time when the accident results in a fatality and 60 percent of the time when the accident results in a non-fatal injury. Passenger vehicle drivers often do not leave a safe distance when moving in front of a commercial vehicle and often hide in commercial vehicle drivers' blind spots. Commercial vehicle drivers have mandatory training of over 100 hours, with specific training on maneuvers around and to avoid passenger vehicles.

CON: The bill requirements are not contemplated in current administrative rule. There are issues when driver's education is taught virtually over Zoom.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Javier Valdez, Prime Sponsor; Jeff DeVere, Washington Trucking Associations; Abigail Potter, Washington Trucking Associations; Melissa Pace, PACE Commercial Drivers License (CDL) Training; Gordon Baxter, Teamsters Union Local 174.

CON: David-Henry Sedelmeier, Driving School owner.

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