
SENATE BILL 5430

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2023 Regular Session

By Senators Shewmake, Hunt, Liias, Lovelett, Nguyen, Saldaña, Valdez, Van De Wege, and C. Wilson

Read first time 01/18/23. Referred to Committee on Transportation.

1 AN ACT Relating to providing support for low-income novice
2 drivers to receive driver training; adding a new section to chapter
3 46.82 RCW; creating a new section; and providing an effective date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** Washington is developing a multimodal
6 transportation system using a complete streets approach. The safety
7 of people who drive, bike, walk, roll, and access transit on public
8 roadways is paramount. When the legislature enacted RCW 46.20.075 in
9 2000, it recognized the need to develop a graduated licensing system
10 in light of the disproportionately high incidence of motor vehicle
11 crashes involving youthful motorists. The intent was to improve
12 highway safety by progressively developing and improving the skills
13 of younger drivers in the safest possible environment, thereby
14 reducing the number of vehicle crashes. Under the safe system
15 approach, the legislature finds that drivers who understand and
16 follow the rules of the road are a protective factor to avoid
17 collisions that cause property damage, bodily injury, and death,
18 benefiting all Washington road users. Novice drivers, including those
19 ages 16 to 25 years, account for a disproportionate number of
20 crashes. Data compiled by the department of licensing show, however,
21 that young drivers who are licensed during the intermediate licensing

1 phase and complete a driver safety course before licensure have lower
2 crash rates compared to their counterparts. Completing an accredited
3 driver safety course and obtaining a license under intermediate
4 licensing requirements may help mitigate the risks of crashes
5 involving novice drivers. Most public schools no longer offer driver
6 education programs, and the cost of driver education from private
7 companies can pose a barrier to obtaining a driver's license for
8 young people in low-income households and those from historically
9 marginalized communities. Many of these communities are also
10 disproportionately represented among victims of serious and fatal
11 crashes. Whereas driving provides opportunities related to education,
12 vocational training, and employment to young people, and whereas safe
13 roads depend upon drivers who know how to use public transportation
14 facilities as they are intended, the legislature finds there is a
15 public interest to support driver education for low-income novice
16 drivers.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 46.82
18 RCW to read as follows:

19 (1) Subject to the availability of funds appropriated for this
20 specific purpose, the department must provide vouchers to cover the
21 average cost of driver's education courses for novice drivers with
22 financial need.

23 (2) In consultation with the Washington traffic safety
24 commission, the department shall establish application and award
25 procedures for implementing this section. The procedures must require
26 the provision of driver training vouchers to individuals residing in
27 low-income households.

28 (3) An applicant who has previously received financial support to
29 complete a driver training program under RCW 74.13.338(2)(b) or
30 49.04.290 is deemed ineligible for a voucher under this section.

31 (4) On a biennial basis beginning June 30, 2026, the department
32 shall report to the appropriate committees of the legislature the
33 following:

34 (a) The income criteria used to determine voucher awards for
35 driver education courses;

36 (b) The number of applicants for driver education vouchers
37 annually by county;

38 (c) The number of vouchers awarded annually by county;

39 (d) The number of vouchers redeemed annually by county;

1 (e) The dollar amount of vouchers redeemed annually by county;
2 and

3 (f) The average household income of voucher recipients during the
4 report period.

5 (5) For the purposes of this section, "novice driver" means a
6 person who has not previously obtained a license to drive a motor
7 vehicle.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** This act takes effect July 1, 2024.

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