

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1172

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Education*

Title: An act relating to student pedestrian safety.

Brief Description: Creating the school pathway and bus stop improvement program.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Holland, Cole, Peery, Brumsickle, G. Fisher, Valle, Brough, Phillips, Rasmussen, Jones, Dorn, P. Johnson, Jacobsen, Winsley, R. King, Pruitt, H. Myers, Ogden, Wood, Vance, Sheldon, Day, Spanel, Leonard, Paris, Rust, Scott, Haugen, Mitchell, Hine, Cantwell, Wynne, Nealey, Miller, Bowman, Moyer, Fraser, O'Brien, Sprenkle, Orr and Tate; by request of Task Force on Student Transportation Safety.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Education, February 14, 1991, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1172 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.*

Signed by 18 members: Representatives Peery, Chair; G. Fisher, Vice Chair; Brough, Ranking Minority Member; Vance, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Betrozoff; Broback; Brumsickle; Dorn; Holland; P. Johnson; Jones; Neher; Orr; Phillips; Rasmussen; Roland; H. Sommers; and Valle.

Staff: Bob Butts (786-7111).

Background: The Task Force on Student Transportation Safety was established in 1989 (ESHB 2066) to develop recommendations for reducing the dangers children face as they travel to and from school. Three of the task force's recommendations included the establishment of a school pathway and bus stop improvement program; clarifying that local developer impact fees may be used for sidewalks, pathways, and school bus stops; and clarifying that school bus stops are required in new subdivisions.

Many children in the State must walk to school on busy streets without sidewalks or adequate shoulders. In addition, children riding school buses are often loaded and unloaded in hazardous locations. These risks are especially high in regions of the State experiencing rapid residential growth. Local jurisdictions have programs to fund sidewalks, paths and trails, but the task force found these programs to be inadequate to meet identified needs.

The State pays the costs of transporting students who live more than one-mile radius of their school. In addition, it pays for transporting children who live within one-mile if: 1) walking to school is determined to be hazardous due to inadequate sidewalks and pathways; and 2) it is demonstrated by the school district that good faith efforts are being made to alleviate the problem. In the 1990-91 school year, \$13.8 million from the general fund was paid to districts by the State for transporting children because of hazardous walking condition determinations.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

School Pathway and Bus Stop Improvement Program

A school pathway and bus stop improvement program is established. A council shall be appointed to: (1) formulate criteria for identifying minimum acceptable walkways, bikeways, and school bus stops, and establish minimum design standards for their improvement; (2) conduct an inventory of school bus stops, and walkways and bikeways within two miles of elementary schools that do not meet the minimum design standards; (3) identify and prioritize improvement projects; (4) assign responsibility and develop a funding plan for them; and (5) estimate the cost of implementing statewide rules for sidewalk crossings.

The council shall include two members of the Senate, two members of the House, and representatives of the Department of Transportation, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, school district administrators, school board members, counties, cities, the Traffic Safety Commission, and parents. The Legislative Transportation Committee shall provide staffing.

The council shall submit recommendations to the Legislature, governor, and other relevant organizations by June 30, 1992. Thereafter the council shall oversee implementation of the recommendations. Authority for the council expires June 30, 1996.

Impact Fees

Legislation passed in 1990 allowing local governments to assess impact fees for public facilities when new developments are permitted (RCW 82.02.090) is amended to specifically include "sidewalks, pathways, and bus stops" in the definition of public facilities.

The statute requiring local governments to make provision for certain items in the public interest when new subdivisions are established (RCW 58.17.110) is amended to specifically include school bus stops.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Several references to unsafe roads were removed, and the duties of the council were clarified. The \$100,000 appropriation was removed.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Appropriation: Removed.

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

Testimony For: The lack of safe walkways near our schools is a problem that needs to be addressed.

Testimony Against: We do not need a statewide panel to address this problem: it is best left to local governments.

Witnesses: Gary H. Tollefsen, Washington State PTA (in favor); Mike Echelbarger, Master Builders of King and Snohomish County (opposed); and Jim Justin, Association of Washington Cities (in favor).