

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5113

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, FEBRUARY 7, 1991

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

SPONSORS: Senators Murray, Skratek, Gaspard, A. Smith, Rinehart, Madsen, Talmadge, Wojahn, Rasmussen, Snyder and Erwin; by request of Task Force on Student Transp. Safety.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5113 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Bailey, Chairman; Erwin, Vice Chairman; Craswell, Murray, Oke, Pelz, Rinehart, A. Smith, and Talmadge.

Staff: Susan Mosborg (786-7439)

Hearing Dates: January 29, 1991; February 7, 1991

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. Among its 11 recommendations are establishing 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.

Some local jurisdictions, such as King and Snohomish Counties, have programs to fund sidewalks, but the task force found these funds have been inadequate to meet identified needs.

SUMMARY:

A school pathways and bus stop improvement program is established. A council shall be appointed to: (1) formulate criteria for identifying unsafe roads and bus stops, and establish standards for their improvement; (2) conduct an inventory of unsafe roads within a two-mile radius of elementary schools and of unsafe bus stops; (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.

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.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:

The School Pathway and Bus Stop Improvement Council is advisory only and local jurisdictions are not obligated to correct the hazardous conditions identified by the School Pathway and Bus Stop Improvement Council. Language is added to prevent the bill from increasing the liability of local jurisdictions for any accidents that might occur at sites identified by the council as "inadequate."

Appropriation: \$100,000: \$75,000 from the motor vehicle fund to the School Pathway and Bus Stop Improvement Program Council for council activities; \$25,000 from the general fund to the Legislative Transportation Committee for staffing the council.

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

TESTIMONY FOR:

Many parties are concerned about the lack of adequate safety on children's walking routes and at school bus stops. Local jurisdictions would like to work with the council to develop criteria for and plan improvements.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: PRO: Members, Student Transportation Safety Task Force: Greg Nickels, King County Council, Jeff Cook,

Northshore School District, Jim Stevenson, Federal Way School District, Mary Weis, Federal Way School Board; Jim Justin, Association of WA Cities; Gary Tollefsen, WA State PTA; Dwayne Slate, WA State School Directors' Association; Elaine Rose, City of Seattle; Vern Wagar, County Roads Administration Board