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**Transportation Committee**

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**2SHB 1796**

**Brief Description:** Funding driver's education for low-income students.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Murray, Hankins, Dunshee, Anderson, Lantz, Eickmeyer, McIntire, Kagi, Conway, Kenney, Schual-Berke, Wood, Lovick, Santos and Edwards).

**Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill**

- Provides funding for reduced-fee traffic safety education for low-income students through a \$1 fee assessment on all new and replacement reflective license plates issued.
- Allows school districts with no traffic safety ed-program to provide scholarships to low-income students to attend private traffic safety school.

**Hearing Date:** 2/2/04

**Staff:** Jill Satran (786-7315).

**Background:**

Traffic safety education is provided to students in school districts throughout the state. Historically, these programs have been funded through a mixture of funds provided by the state, the school district and individual students' families. Until recently, state funds have been available to support all such traffic safety education programs, and an additional amount has been available specifically to reduce these fees for low-income students. During the 2001-2003 biennium, state funding for these programs was eliminated. As a result approximately 35 school districts have reported dropping their traffic safety program due to lack of funding.

**Summary of Bill:**

This bill assesses an additional \$1 per plate fee on all reflective license plates issued at initial vehicle registration and on replacement. These fees are to be deposited in the motor vehicle fund and transferred at least quarterly to the public safety and education account to be used only for lowering the cost to low-income students of traffic safety education programs accredited by school districts, as determined by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The board of directors of each school district or combination of school districts, currently required to set the traffic safety education fee, are also required by this bill to set a reduced fee for low-income students.

Each school district that does not offer an approved traffic safety education program may offer scholarships to low-income students who enroll in a private traffic safety course.

A "low income student" is a student who qualifies to receive school lunches on a reduced-cost or free basis.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 2004.