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SENATE BILL 5297

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State of Washington

58th Legislature

2003 Regular Session

By Senators Horn and Haugen

Read first time 01/22/2003. Referred to Committee on Highways & Transportation.

1 AN ACT Relating to driver's license examinations; amending RCW  
2 46.20.120 and 46.20.181; adding new sections to chapter 46.20 RCW; and  
3 creating a new section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature recognizes the importance of  
6 global markets to our state and national economy. As a leader among  
7 states in international commerce, Washington houses many multinational  
8 corporations. Competition among states for foreign businesses and  
9 personnel is fierce and it is necessary to Washington's future economic  
10 viability to eliminate a significant regulatory barrier to efficient  
11 personnel exchange, resulting in a more attractive business climate in  
12 Washington. The legislature recognizes that over twenty other states  
13 have entered into informal reciprocal agreements with other nations to  
14 waive driver's license testing requirements in order to ease the  
15 transition of personnel to and from those states. By removing an  
16 unnecessary barrier to efficient personnel mobility it is the intent of  
17 the legislature to strengthen and diversify Washington's economy.

1       **Sec. 2.** RCW 46.20.120 and 2002 c 352 s 13 are each amended to read  
2 as follows:

3       An applicant for a new or renewed driver's license must  
4 successfully pass a driver licensing examination to qualify for a  
5 driver's license. The department shall give examinations at places and  
6 times reasonably available to the people of this state.

7       (1) **Waiver.** The department may waive:

8       (a) All or any part of the examination of any person applying for  
9 the renewal of a driver's license unless the department determines that  
10 the applicant is not qualified to hold a driver's license under this  
11 title; or

12       (b) The actual demonstration of the ability to operate a motor  
13 vehicle if the applicant:

14       (i) Surrenders a valid driver's license issued by the person's  
15 previous home state; and

16       (ii) Is otherwise qualified to be licensed; or

17       (c) All or any part of the examination of a person, age eighteen  
18 years or older, applying for a Washington driver's license who provides  
19 for verification a valid driver's license issued by a nation with which  
20 the department has an informal agreement authorized under section 3 of  
21 this act.

22       (2) **Fee.** Each applicant for a new license must pay an examination  
23 fee of ten dollars.

24       (a) The examination fee is in addition to the fee charged for  
25 issuance of the license.

26       (b) "New license" means a license issued to a driver:

27       (i) Who has not been previously licensed in this state; or

28       (ii) Whose last previous Washington license has been expired for  
29 more than five years.

30       (3) A person whose license expired or will expire on or after  
31 January 1, 1998, while he or she was or is living outside the state  
32 may:

33       (a) Apply to the department to extend the validity of his or her  
34 license for no more than twelve months. If the person establishes to  
35 the department's satisfaction that he or she is unable to return to  
36 Washington before the date his or her license expires, the department  
37 shall extend the person's license. The department may grant  
38 consecutive extensions, but in no event may the cumulative total of

1 extensions exceed twelve months. An extension granted under this  
2 section does not change the expiration date of the license for purposes  
3 of RCW 46.20.181. The department shall charge a fee of five dollars  
4 for each license extension;

5 (b) Apply to the department to renew his or her license by mail.  
6 If the person establishes to the department's satisfaction that he or  
7 she is unable to return to Washington within twelve months of the date  
8 that his or her license expires, the department shall renew the  
9 person's license by mail. If a person qualifies for a mail-in renewal  
10 he or she is not required to pass an examination nor provide an updated  
11 photograph. He or she must, however, pay the fee required by RCW  
12 46.20.181 plus an additional five-dollar mail-in renewal fee. A  
13 license renewed by mail that does not include a photograph of the  
14 licensee must be labeled "not valid for identification purposes."

15 (4) If a person's driver's license is extended or renewed under  
16 subsection (3) of this section while he or she is outside the state, he  
17 or she must submit to the examination required under this section  
18 within sixty days of returning to this state. The department will not  
19 assess a penalty or examination fee for the examination.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 46.20 RCW  
21 to read as follows:

22 (1) The department may enter into an informal agreement with one or  
23 more other nations to waive the requirement for licensed drivers, age  
24 eighteen years or older, from that nation to take all or any part of  
25 the driver's license examination.

26 (2) The department may only enter into an agreement with a nation  
27 if:

28 (a) The nation has procedures in place to verify the validity of  
29 drivers' licenses issued by that nation; and

30 (b) The nation has agreed to waive all or any part of the driver's  
31 license examination and education requirements for Washington licensed  
32 drivers applying for a driver's license in that nation.

33 **Sec. 4.** RCW 46.20.181 and 1999 c 308 s 3 are each amended to read  
34 as follows:

35 (1) Except as provided in subsection (4) of this section, every

1 driver's license expires on the fifth anniversary of the licensee's  
2 birthdate following the issuance of the license.

3 (2) Except as provided in subsection (5) of this section, a person  
4 may renew his or her license on or before the expiration date by  
5 submitting an application as prescribed by the department and paying a  
6 fee of twenty-five dollars. This fee includes the fee for the required  
7 photograph.

8 (3) A person renewing his or her driver's license more than sixty  
9 days after the license has expired shall pay a penalty fee of ten  
10 dollars in addition to the renewal fee, unless his or her license  
11 expired when:

12 (a) The person was outside the state and he or she renews the  
13 license within sixty days after returning to this state; or

14 (b) The person was incapacitated and he or she renews the license  
15 within sixty days after the termination of the incapacity.

16 (4) During the period from July 1, 2000, to July 1, 2006, the  
17 department may issue or renew a driver's license for a period other  
18 than five years, or may extend by mail a license that has already been  
19 issued, in order to evenly distribute, as nearly as possible, the  
20 yearly renewal rate of licensed drivers. The fee for a driver's  
21 license issued or renewed for a period other than five years, or that  
22 has been extended by mail, is five dollars for each year that the  
23 license is issued, renewed, or extended. The department may adopt any  
24 rules as are necessary to carry out this subsection.

25 (5) A driver's license issued under a waiver as provided in RCW  
26 46.20.120(1)(c) may not be renewed.

27 NEW SECTION. Sec. 5. A new section is added to chapter 46.20 RCW  
28 to read as follows:

29 The department may make rules to carry out the purposes of this  
30 act.

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