

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5273

As Passed Senate, February 23, 2007

Title: An act relating to motorcycle driver's license endorsement and education.

Brief Description: Modifying motorcycle driver's license endorsement and education provisions.

Sponsors: Senators Swecker, Murray and Keiser; by request of Department of Licensing, Washington Traffic Safety Commission and Washington State Patrol.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/23/07, 1/29/07 [DP, DNP].
Passed Senate: 2/23/07, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Marr, Vice Chair; Murray, Vice Chair; Swecker, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Clements, Delvin, Jacobsen, Kastama, Kauffman, Kilmer and Spanel.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Holmquist.

Staff: Janice Baumgardt (786-7319)

Background: When applying for a special endorsement for a motorcycle, there is a \$5 application fee which goes to the Highway Safety Account.

Washington residents under age 18 are required to take a driver training class in order to obtain a driver's license, except under very limited circumstances. Courses may be offered at both high schools and commercial driver training schools. The Superintendent of Public Instruction sets the basic course requirements for traffic safety education courses offered in high schools. The Driver's Instructors' Advisory Committee is required to create a basic minimum curriculum for courses offered at commercial driver training schools. Both the Superintendent and the Advisory Committee are required to include, among other things, information in driver education courses on the effects of alcohol and drug use on motor vehicle operators, the proper use of the left hand lane, and information on motorcycle awareness. The information on motorcycle awareness must be approved by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

In 1982, legislation passed requiring the Department of Licensing (DOL) to create a voluntary motorcycle operator training and education program to provide public awareness of motorcycle safety and to provide classroom and on-cycle training. DOL may waive all or a portion of the motorcycle endorsement examination for people who satisfactorily complete the motorcycle operator training and education program. Persons taking the motorcycle safety education class offered by DOL must pay no more than \$100 and persons under the age of 18 must pay no more than \$50.

Summary of Bill: The \$5 special endorsement fee is directed to the Motorcycle Safety Education Account.

The information on motorcycle awareness required to be provided in driver training courses must be approved by the Department of Licensing Director, rather than the Motorcycle Safety Foundation.

The requirement that the DOL motorcycle safety education class encourage the use of radio- or intercom-equipped helmets is removed.

The maximum fee that may be charged to persons taking the motorcycle safety education class is increased to \$125.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Untrained riders represent too large a portion of motorcycle fatalities. There are not enough subsidized courses for people to take to get trained; this bill will provide additional funding so more people can get trained.

CON: We don't have assurances that this bill will result in additional training being made available.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Chief Batiste, Washington State Patrol; Liz Luce, Director, Department of Licensing; Steve Lind, Washington Traffic Safety Commission; Pat Barnes, Motorcycle Safety Task Force; Larry Walker, Washington Road Riders Association; Carl Spurgeon, motorcyclist; Bret Tkacs, motorcycle training instructor.

CON: Ginger Magures, American Bikers Aimed Towards Education of Washington.