

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5655

As of February 14, 2007

Title: An act relating to intermediate drivers' licenses.

Brief Description: Revising penalties for intermediate driver's license violations.

Sponsors: Senator Fairley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/14/07.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Martha Hankins (786-7429)

Background: Washington, like most states, offers a graduated drivers' license that places restrictions on beginning and intermediate drivers. The graduated license process identifies three distinct phases and requires a specific license at each phase.

Stage 1: Driver's instruction permit (sometimes called a learner's permit);

Stage 2: Intermediate drivers license (IDL);

Stage 3: Regular unrestricted driver's license.

Washington's IDL program went into effect in 2001. It provides novice drivers the opportunity to gain driving experience under low risk conditions by placing certain restrictions on young drivers:

- for the first six months no passengers under age 20, except family members;
- then, until age 18, a maximum of three passengers under age 20 who are not family members;
- no driving between the hours of 1 a.m. and 5 a.m. unless accompanied by a parent, guardian, or licensed driver over age 25.

Under current law, when a person holding an IDL is convicted of a traffic infraction or found to have violated the IDL restrictions, in addition to penalties imposed by the courts, the Department of Licensing (DOL) sends his or her parent or guardian a letter.

Upon a second conviction, in addition to any penalties imposed by the courts, the person's IDL is suspended for six months, or until age 18, whichever comes first; and the DOL sends the parent or guardian a letter.

Upon a third conviction, in addition to any penalties imposed by the courts, the person's IDL gets suspended until age 18 and the DOL sends the parent or guardian a letter.

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.

Summary of Bill: The penalties imposed on holders of an IDL after a second traffic conviction are changed. Instead of suspending his or her license, the holder of the IDL cannot operate a vehicle unless a person with at least five years driving experience occupies the seat next to them.

Failure to adhere to this additional restriction is considered a traffic infraction.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: OTHER: Reducing the penalty for violating the IDL goes against what the law is trying to accomplish.

Persons Testifying: OTHER: Steve Lind, Washington Traffic Safety Commission.