

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5430

As of January 31, 2023

Title: An act relating to providing support for low-income novice drivers to receive driver training.

Brief Description: Providing support for low-income novice drivers to receive driver training.

Sponsors: Senators Shewmake, Hunt, Lias, Lovelett, Nguyen, Saldaña, Valdez, Van De Wege and Wilson, C..

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/31/23.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Licensing to provide vouchers to cover the average cost of driver's education courses for novice drivers with financial need, subject to appropriation.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Brandon Popovac (786-7465)

Background: Driver Training Education. The Department of Licensing (DOL) requires individuals under the age of 18 to obtain an instruction permit and to complete a driver training education course to be eligible to obtain an intermediate driver's license. These requirements do not apply to individuals age 18 or older.

Private driver training schools and some school districts offer driver training education courses. The cost of a driver training education course varies by provider.

Other Driver Training Education Programs. The Department of Children, Youth, and Families is required to contract with a private nonprofit organization to provide driver's

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

license support for foster youth, subject to appropriation. Such support includes the reimbursement of fees required for a foster youth under the age of 18 to complete a driver training education course.

The Department of Labor and Industries is required to provide vouchers to cover the cost of driver training education courses for minors enrolled in a state-registered apprenticeship program, subject to appropriation.

Summary of Bill: Beginning July 1, 2024, DOL must provide vouchers, subject to appropriation, to cover the average cost of driver's education courses for persons in low-income households who have not previously obtained a license to drive a motor vehicle. In consultation with the Washington Traffic Safety Commission, DOL must establish application and award procedures for the voucher program. Any voucher program applicant who has previously received financial support from a private nonprofit organization to complete a driver training education course as a qualified foster youth or as part of a state-registered apprenticeship program is not eligible.

DOL must report biennially, beginning June 30, 2026, to the Legislature:

- income criteria used to determine voucher awards;
- number of applicants for vouchers annually by county;
- number of vouchers awarded and redeemed annually by county;
- dollar amount of vouchers redeemed annually by county; and
- average household income of voucher recipients during the applicable reporting period.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2024.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: It is important to have safer roads. There is strong support for reintroducing traffic education back in the schools. A significant portion of students are not enrolling in driver's education due to cost. Revenue from another bill, SB 5272, should be used to fund the voucher program.

OTHER: Voucher program costs are not contemplated in the budget, and the bill has significant fiscal impacts, based on the assumption the program will have 6000 applicants. Drivers who have not completed driver training education have a 70 percent higher rate of crashes. Cost of driver's education is a major barrier to students enrolling in traffic safety education. Some youth wait until their 18 years of age to avoid driver training costs completely, especially among BIPOC—whom are disproportionately impacted. Use of

driver's education vouchers estimated to result in avoidance of 4000 injuries with a savings of \$3.7 million. Some administrative suggestions for the bill include modifying reporting requirements related to privacy concerns, and clarifying voucher awards are available based upon application rather than as an agency mandate.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Sharon Shewmake, Prime Sponsor; Lynn Rogers, Professional Driving School Association of Washington.

OTHER: Mark McKechnie, Washington Traffic Safety Commission; Beau Perschbacher, WA Dept. of Licensing.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.