

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6176

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Transportation, February 5, 2026

Title: An act relating to the enforcement of failure to renew an expired vehicle registration.

Brief Description: Concerning the enforcement of failure to renew an expired vehicle registration.

Sponsors: Senators King and Lias.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/26/26, 2/05/26 [DPS, DNP, w/oRec].

Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill

- Creates a traffic infraction of failing to renew an expired registration of a vehicle parked, standing, and unoccupied on the public right-of-way or publicly owned property.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6176 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Lias, Chair; Krishnadasan, Vice Chair; Lovick, Vice Chair; King, Ranking Member; Goehner, Assistant Ranking Member; Cortes, Fortunato, Harris, Holy, Hunt, Shewmake and Valdez.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Christian and Nobles.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Alvarado, Chapman, MacEwen and Wilson, J..

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.

Staff: Brandon Popovac (786-7465)

Background: It is unlawful for a person to operate a vehicle on a public highway of this state without having in full force and effect a current and proper vehicle registration and displaying license plates on the vehicle. Failure to initially register a vehicle before operating the vehicle on the public highways of this state is a traffic infraction, with a total fine of \$1,136. Failure to renew an expired vehicle registration before operating a vehicle on the public highways of this state is also a traffic infraction, with a total fine of \$150 if the registration has been expired two months or less or \$242 if the registration has been expired for more than two months.

The 2025-27 biennial transportation budget provided funds to the Department of Licensing to send periodic notifications to vehicle owners with significantly expired vehicle registrations to increase compliance with annual vehicle registration requirements. Notifications must contain information about vehicle registration requirements and possible penalties associated with operating a vehicle with an expired registration.

Summary of Bill (First Substitute): Failure to renew an expired registration of a vehicle parked, standing, and unoccupied on the public right-of-way or on publicly owned property is a traffic infraction. The infraction is issued to the registered owner, but is not part of the registered owner's driving record and must be processed in the same manner as a parking infraction.

The penalty for failure to renew an expired registration of a parked, standing, and unoccupied vehicle is \$150 if the registration has been expired two months or less or \$242 if the registration has been expired for more than two months.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (First Substitute):

- Removes the traffic infraction of and enforcement authority for failing to renew an expired vehicle registration for vehicles parked and unoccupied in a privately owned, off-street parking facility imposing parking fees.
- Corrects penalty amounts for failing to renew an expired vehicle registration for parked and unoccupied vehicles to match the total penalty for failing to renew an expired vehicle registration when enforced as a moving violation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: Currently law enforcement can only enforce expired car tabs as a traffic infraction when the vehicle is operating. Drivers have more of an incentive not to renew car tabs as other applicable vehicle registration fees are too high. The bill ensures more fairness.

CON: The bill represents another money grab that would only result in a few crumbs of extra revenue. Voters have said they do not want to pay more than \$30 car tabs. Drivers have been silently protesting the costs of car tabs through nonpayment. Drivers are confused on overall car tab expenses and costs. The Department of Licensing's license express service is not effective or well used.

OTHER: Testifier was available for questions.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Curtis King, Prime Sponsor.

CON: Jeff Pack, Washington Citizens Against Unfair Taxes; Tim Eyman, Initiative Activist.

OTHER: Brandon Bannister, Washington State Department of Licensing.

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