



**SENATOR GINNY BURDICK  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE**

Written testimony to the Senate Committee on Business and Transportation

February 25, 2013

Good afternoon, Chair Beyer and members of the committee.

For the record, my name is Ginny Burdick. I represent Senate District 18, which encompasses Tigard and parts of Southwest and Northwest Portland.

Thank you for hearing SB 511 today. SB 511 makes it an offense to drive in the far left lane of a multi-lane highway unless passing a vehicle.

As a frequent commuter between Portland and Salem, I have long been frustrated by the lack of proper etiquette when sharing the road. Currently, unless someone is driving a freight truck or a vehicle with a camper or trailer, there is no requirement to move out of the left lane unless the driver is impeding the "normal and reasonable movement of traffic." I am confident that members of the committee have also been frustrated when their commute is impeded by a motorist in the left lane driving more slowly than surrounding traffic. According to Oregonian columnist Joseph Rose, Oregon law says, in effect, that you need to find a way around these slower drivers. That is simply not safe. If the left lane is used exclusively for passing, the roads will be safer and all drivers will be less frustrated.

A similar left lane passing bill in Washington has been effective. According to Washington State Patrol, in 2012, 1,097 arrests were made, 388 written warnings were issued, and 12,752 people were given verbal warnings. To juxtapose that with the numbers in Oregon, only 125 citations were issued in violation of OR 811.325. Clearly we need to give the Oregon State Police more enforcement authority to make sure that traffic flows smoothly and safely. I believe that SB 511 will give them the tools and the bright line to issue citations or warnings to drivers who impede the flow of traffic.

I also encourage your adoption of the -1 amendment which addresses concerns about the bill regarding exemptions for drivers when traffic is congested and allowing cars to use the middle lanes on a highway with three or more lanes of traffic.

I urge your support of this common sense bill.

I'm happy to take any questions the committee may have.

