

SB 532 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Business and Transportation

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Meeting Dates: 3/6, 3/15

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Expands prohibition on driving in the left-most lane of travel to all vehicles. Provides exceptions. Classifies offense as a Class D traffic violation, punishable by a maximum fine of \$250. Clarifies that campers, vehicles with trailers and vehicles with registration weight of 10,000 pounds or greater must drive in right-most lane on roads with at least two lanes in a single direction of travel.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Exceptions for traffic congestion, weather and road conditions
- Other states with similar laws
- Designed to minimize aggressive driving and "road rage" behaviors
- Appropriate distances when passing other vehicles

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

[-1 amendment - ADOPTED 3-6-17] Clarifies language regarding exemption due to slower flow of traffic.

[-3 amendment] Allows driving in left lane to avoid obstruction or adverse conditions in other lanes.

BACKGROUND:

Under current statute, certain motor vehicles are required to remain in the right-most lane while traveling along a multilane highway. Unlike many other states, Oregon does not designate the left-most lane of multilane highways as a passing lane. In those states, a driver can be cited for failing to move back into the right-hand lane after passing a slower vehicle moving in the same direction. However, ORS 811.325 specifies that campers, trailers and vehicles with a registered weight of over 10,000 pounds must be driven in the right lane except to pass, to turn left, to avoid emergency conditions, to allow vehicles to merge from an onramp, or when necessary to follow traffic control devices. The offense is considered a Class B traffic violation, punishable by a maximum fine of \$1,000.

Senate Bill 532 expands the applicability of the prohibition against traveling in the left-most lane to all vehicles. The measure limits applicability to roads with posted speeds greater than 55 miles per hour, and would not apply at times when traffic is moving slower than the normal flow of traffic.