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**SENATE BILL 5430**

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**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2023 Regular Session**

**By** Senator Shewmake

1 AN ACT Relating to providing support for low-income novice  
2 drivers to receive driver training; adding a new section to chapter  
3 46.82 RCW; creating a new section; and providing an effective date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** Washington is developing a multimodal  
6 transportation system using a complete streets approach. The safety  
7 of people who drive, bike, walk, roll, and access transit on public  
8 roadways is paramount. When the legislature enacted RCW 46.20.075 in  
9 2000, it recognized the need to develop a graduated licensing system  
10 in light of the disproportionately high incidence of motor vehicle  
11 crashes involving youthful motorists. The intent was to improve  
12 highway safety by progressively developing and improving the skills  
13 of younger drivers in the safest possible environment, thereby  
14 reducing the number of vehicle crashes. Under the safe system  
15 approach, the legislature finds that drivers who understand and  
16 follow the rules of the road are a protective factor to avoid  
17 collisions that cause property damage, bodily injury, and death,  
18 benefiting all Washington road users. Novice drivers, including those  
19 ages 16 to 25 years, account for a disproportionate number of  
20 crashes. Data compiled by the department of licensing show, however,  
21 that young drivers who are licensed during the intermediate licensing

1 phase and complete a driver safety course before licensure have lower  
2 crash rates compared to their counterparts. Completing an accredited  
3 driver safety course and obtaining a license under intermediate  
4 licensing requirements may help mitigate the risks of crashes  
5 involving novice drivers. Most public schools no longer offer driver  
6 education programs, and the cost of driver education from private  
7 companies can pose a barrier to obtaining a driver's license for  
8 young people in low-income households and those from historically  
9 marginalized communities. Many of these communities are also  
10 disproportionately represented among victims of serious and fatal  
11 crashes. Whereas driving provides opportunities related to education,  
12 vocational training, and employment to young people, and whereas safe  
13 roads depend upon drivers who know how to use public transportation  
14 facilities as they are intended, the legislature finds there is a  
15 public interest to support driver education for low-income novice  
16 drivers.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 46.82  
18 RCW to read as follows:

19 (1) Subject to the availability of funds appropriated for this  
20 specific purpose, the department must provide vouchers to cover the  
21 average cost of driver's education courses for novice drivers with  
22 financial need.

23 (2) In consultation with the Washington traffic safety  
24 commission, the department shall establish application and award  
25 procedures for implementing this section. The procedures must require  
26 the provision of driver training vouchers to individuals residing in  
27 low-income households.

28 (3) An applicant who has previously received financial support to  
29 complete a driver training program under RCW 74.13.338(2)(b) or  
30 49.04.290 is deemed ineligible for a voucher under this section.

31 (4) On a biennial basis beginning June 30, 2026, the department  
32 shall report to the appropriate committees of the legislature the  
33 following:

34 (a) The income criteria used to determine voucher awards for  
35 driver education courses;

36 (b) The number of applicants for driver education vouchers  
37 annually by county;

38 (c) The number of vouchers awarded annually by county;

39 (d) The number of vouchers redeemed annually by county;

1 (e) The dollar amount of vouchers redeemed annually by county;  
2 and

3 (f) The average household income of voucher recipients during the  
4 report period.

5 (5) For the purposes of this section, "novice driver" means a  
6 person who has not previously obtained a license to drive a motor  
7 vehicle.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** This act takes effect July 1, 2024.

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