

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Transportation

BILL: SB 908

INTRODUCER: Senator Altman

SUBJECT: Transportation

DATE: February 26, 2015

REVISED: _____

| | ANALYST | STAFF DIRECTOR | REFERENCE | ACTION |
|----|---------|----------------|-----------|--------------------|
| 1. | Price | Eichin | TR | Pre-meeting |
| 2. | | | CJ | |
| 3. | | | FP | |

I. Summary:

SB 908 seeks to increase the safety of “vulnerable users of a public-right-of-way.” The bill:

- Revises and creates various statutory provisions and penalties relating to traffic control laws and vulnerable users, such as pedestrians and bicyclists;
- Clarifies provisions relating to overtaking and passing vulnerable users, particularly with respect to maintaining required distance between a passing vehicle and a vulnerable user;
- Sets out requirements for making a right turn when passing a vulnerable user;
- Allow drivers to cross the centerline in an identified no-passing zone when passing a vulnerable user;
- Prohibits harassing, taunting, or throwing an object at a person riding a bicycle;
- Revises the definition of “substandard-width lane” with regards to the requirement to operate a bicycle as close as practicable to the right-hand edge of the roadway;
- Provides additional penalties for certain violations contributing to the bodily injury of a vulnerable user;
- Requires appearance at a mandatory hearing for certain violations contributing to the bodily injury of a vulnerable user;
- Requires law enforcement officers issuing certain citations to note if the violation contributed to the bodily injury of a vulnerable user;
- Requires the curriculum for certain education courses and examinations to provide instruction on traffic laws relating to the rights and safety of vulnerable users of public rights-of-way; and
- Provides a severability clause.

II. Present Situation:

Definitions

Current law defines certain relevant terms for purposes of chapter 316, F.S., relating to traffic control laws, as follows:

- “Vehicle” means every device, in, upon, or by which any person or property is or may be transported or drawn upon a highway, except devices used exclusively upon stationary rails or tracks.¹
- “Bicycle” means every vehicle propelled solely by human power, and every motorized bicycle propelled by a combination of human power and an electric helper motor capable of propelling the vehicle at a speed of not more than 20 miles per hour on level ground upon which any person may ride, having two tandem wheels, and including any device generally recognized as a bicycle though equipped with two front or two rear wheels. The term does not include such a vehicle with a seat height of no more than 25 inches from the ground when the seat is adjusted to its highest position or a scooter or similar device.²
- “Right-of-way” means the right of one vehicle or pedestrian to proceed in a lawful manner in preference to another vehicle or pedestrian approaching under such circumstances of direction, speed, and proximity as to give rise to danger of collision unless one grants precedence to the other.³
- “Roadway” means that portion of a highway improved, designed, or ordinarily used for vehicular travel, exclusive of the berm or shoulder.⁴

The term “bodily injury,” is defined identically in various sections of Florida Statutes^{5,6,7} to mean:

- A cut, abrasion, bruise, burn, or disfigurement;
- Physical pain;
- Illness;
- Impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty; or
- Any other injury to the body, no matter how temporary.

The term “vulnerable road user,” as used in provisions relating to crashes involving death or personal injuries, is defined to mean:

- A pedestrian, including a person actually engaged in work upon a highway, or in work upon utility facilities along a highway, or engaged in the provision of emergency services within the right-of-way;
- A person operating a bicycle, motorcycle, scooter, or moped lawfully on the roadway;
- A person riding an animal; or
- A person lawfully operating on a public right-of-way, crosswalk, or shoulder of the roadway:

¹ Section 316.003(75), F.S.

² Section 316.003(2), F.S.

³ Section 316.003(40), F.S.

⁴ Section 316.003(42), F.S.

⁵ Section 501.001(1)(c), F.S.

⁶ Section 831.03(1), F.S.

⁷ Section 914.21, F.S.

- A farm tractor or similar vehicle designed primarily for farm use;
- A skateboard, roller skates, or in-line skates;
- A horse-drawn carriage;
- An electric personal assistive mobility device; or
- A wheelchair.⁸

Driving on Right Side of Roadway

Vehicles must generally be driven up the right half of the roadway, with certain exceptions, such as when overtaking and passing another vehicle proceeding in the same direction and when an obstruction exists making it necessary to drive to the left of the center of the highway.⁹

Additionally, any vehicle traveling at less than the normal speed of traffic under existing conditions must be driven in the right-hand lane or as close as practicable to the right-hand curb or edge of the roadway, except when overtaking and passing another vehicle proceeding in the same direction or when preparing for a left turn at an intersection or into a private road or driveway.¹⁰ Similarly, any person operating a bicycle upon a roadway at less than normal speed of traffic under existing conditions must be ridden in the lane marked for bicycle use or, if no marked lane exists, as close as practicable to the right-hand curb or edge of the roadway except when:

- Overtaking and passing another bicycle or vehicle traveling in the same direction;
- Preparing for a left turn at an intersection or into a private road or driveway; or when
- Reasonably necessary to avoid any condition or potential conflict, including without limitation a fixed or moving object, parked or moving vehicle, bicycle, pedestrian, animal, surface hazard, turn lane, or substandard-width lane, which makes it unsafe to continue along the right-hand curb or edge or within a bicycle lane.¹¹

“Substandard-width lane” is defined to mean a lane that is too narrow for a bicycle and another vehicle to travel safely side by side within the lane.¹²

Overtaking and Passing

Section 316.083, F.S., sets out requirements relating to overtaking and passing vehicles proceeding in the same direction. The driver of a vehicle overtaking another proceeding in the same direction must give an appropriate signal,¹³ pass to the left at a safe distance, and not again drive to the right side of the roadway until safely clear of the overtaken vehicle. When overtaking a bicycle or other nonmotorized vehicle, the driver of the overtaking vehicle must pass at a safe distance not less than three feet between the overtaking vehicle and the bicycle.¹⁴

⁸ Section 316.027, F.S.

⁹ Section 316.081(1), F.S. *See also* s. 316.087, F.S., for further limitations on driving to the left of center of a roadway, which limitations do not apply when an obstruction exists making it necessary to drive to the left of center, or when a driver is turning left into or from an alley, private road or driveway.

¹⁰ Section 316.081(2), F.S.

¹¹ Section 316.2065(5)(a), F.S.

¹² Section 316.2065(5)(a)3., F.S. *See also* s. 316.208, F.S., reflecting almost identical requirements and providing the same definition of “substandard-width lane” relating to mopeds.

¹³ Generally, by means of the hand and arm or by signal lamps. *See* ss. 316.155, 316.156, and 316.157, F.S.

¹⁴ Section 316.083(2), F.S.

Except when overtaking and passing on the right is permitted, the driver of an overtaken vehicle must give way to the right in favor of the overtaking vehicle, on audible signal or upon visible flashing of the headlamps of the overtaking vehicle if at nighttime. The driver of the overtaken vehicle is prohibited from increasing speed until completely passed by the overtaking vehicle.¹⁵ A violation is a noncriminal traffic infraction, punishable as a moving violation, the penalty for which is \$60.¹⁶

Right Turns on Red

Generally, a vehicle facing a steady red signal must stop before entering a crosswalk on the near side of an intersection or, if none, then before entering the intersection, and remain stopped until a green indication is shown. Right turns on red are authorized, but a driver must yield the right-of-way to pedestrians and other traffic proceeding as directed by the signal at the intersection. Cities and counties may prohibit right-turns-on-red at any intersection with notice of the prohibition erected in a location visible to traffic approaching the intersection.^{17, 18} The approach for a right turn and a right turn itself must be made as close as practicable to the right-hand curb or edge of the roadway.¹⁹

No-Passing Zones

A driver is prohibited from driving on the left side of a roadway if signs or markings are in place to define a no-passing zone, or on the left side of any pavement striping designed to mark such no-passing zone throughout its length.²⁰ The prohibition does not apply when an obstruction exists making it necessary to drive to the left of the center of the highway, or to the driver of a vehicle turning left into or from an alley, private road, or driveway.²¹ A no-passing zone violation is a noncriminal traffic infraction, punishable as a moving violation, the penalty for which is \$60.²²

Infractions Requiring Mandatory Hearing

Current law requires appearance at a mandatory hearing for any person cited for the following:

- Any infraction resulting in a crash that causes the death of another;
- Any infraction resulting in a crash that causes “serious bodily injury” of another as defined in s. 316.1933(1);

¹⁵ Section 316.083(2), F.S.

¹⁶ Sections 316.083(3) and 318.18(3), F.S.

¹⁷ Section 316.074(1), F.S., and s. 316.075(1)(c), F.S.

¹⁸ A notice of violation or a traffic citation for a red light violation detected by a traffic infraction detector, or a “red light camera,” may not be issued for failure to stop at a red light if the driver is making a right-hand turn in a careful and prudent manner at intersections where right-hand turns are permissible. Section 316.0083, F.S.

¹⁹ Section 316.151, F.S.

²⁰ Section 316.0875(2), F.S. Section 316.0875(1), F.S., authorizes the Florida Department of Transportation and local authorities to determine those portions of any highway where overtaking and passing or driving to the left of the roadway would be hazardous and, by appropriate signs or markings on the roadway, to indicate the beginning and end of such zones.

²¹ Section 316.0875(3), F.S.

²² Sections 316.0875(4) and 318.18(3), F.S.

- Any infraction for passing a school bus displaying a stop signal, when passing on the side that children enter or exit;
- Any infraction for failure to secure the load being hauled on a vehicle;
- Any infraction for exceeding certain speed limits by 30 miles per hour or more.²³

Traffic Law and Substance Abuse Education/Test of Applicant's Knowledge for Driver Licensing and Operation of Motor Vehicles

Any person applying for a driver license must complete a traffic law and substance abuse education course, unless the applicant has been licensed in another jurisdiction or has satisfactorily completed a school-based Department of Education driver education course offered pursuant to s. 1003.48, F.S. The Department of Highway Safety & Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) must approve traffic law and substance abuse education courses. Each course provider must, among other requirements, submit the curriculum for the courses which must promote motorcyclist, bicyclist, and pedestrian safety and provide instruction on the physiological, psychological, societal and economic consequences of drug and alcohol abuse; the laws relating to operating a motor vehicle; the risk factors involved in driver attitude and irresponsible driver behaviors; and the results of using electronic devices while driving.²⁴

Applicants for a Class E driver license, the license held by most Florida drivers, must, among other requirements, undergo examination testing the applicant's eyesight and hearing, ability to read and understand highway signs regulating traffic, knowledge of traffic laws, and knowledge of the effects of alcohol and controlled substances. The examination must include an actual demonstration of ability to exercise ordinary and reasonable control in the operation of a motor vehicle.²⁵ Applicants for a commercial driver license must undergo similar examination, with some additional examination topics.²⁶ Each district school board must make available to students of secondary schools a course of study and instruction in the safe and lawful operation of a motor vehicle.²⁷

Driver Improvement Course

The DHSMV is required to screen crash reports to identify certain crashes. If a crash involves death or a bodily injury requiring transport to a medical facility, or if a second crash occurs involving the same operator within the previous two-year period with property damage of at least \$500, the DHSMV must require the operator to attend a DHSMV-approved driver improvement course to maintain the operator's driving privileges. The DHSMV is required to include in the course curriculum instruction specifically addressing the rights of vulnerable road users as defined in s. 316.027, F.S.

²³ Section 318.19, F.S. Section 316.1933(1)(b), F.S., defines "serious bodily injury" to mean an injury to any person, including the driver, which consists of a physical condition that creates a substantial risk of death, serious personal disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily member or organ.

²⁴ Section 322.095, F.S.

²⁵ Section 322.12(3), F.S.

²⁶ Section 322.12(4), F.S.

²⁷ Section 1003.48, F.S.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1 amends s. 316.003, F.S., to define the term “bodily injury” identically as that term is already defined in existing law. The bill also defines the term “vulnerable user of a public right-of-way” or “vulnerable user” identically to the definition of “vulnerable road user” in current s. 316.027, F.S., except that the phrase “or roadway” is inserted after the word “highway” with regard to pedestrians; and passengers on a bicycle, motorcycle, scooter, or moped lawfully on the roadway are included in the definition. The new definition is broader for general purposes of ch. 316, F.S., than the existing definition in s. 316.027, F.S., relating to crashes involving death or personal injuries, as the existing definition does not include passengers.

Section 2 revises s. 316.083, F.S., relating to overtaking and passing a vehicle, to:

- Clarify that subsection (2) is applicable to the driver of a *motor* vehicle overtaking a *person operating* a bicycle or other *vulnerable user of a public right-of-way*;
- Require such driver to pass the person operating the bicycle or the vulnerable user at a safe distance of no less than three feet *as measured from anything extending from the motor vehicle and trailer or other item towed by the motor vehicle*; and
- Require that a law enforcement officer issuing a citation for a violation note on the citation if the violation contributed to the bodily injury of a vulnerable user of a public right-of-way.

Section 3 creates s. 316.0833, F.S., to prohibit a person operating a vehicle while overtaking and passing a vulnerable user of a public right-of-way traveling in the same direction from making a right turn at an intersection or into a private road or driveway unless the turn can be made at a safe distance from the vulnerable user with reasonable safety and will not impede the travel of the vulnerable user. A violation is a noncriminal traffic infraction, punishable as a moving violation, the penalty for which is \$60. A law enforcement officer issuing a citation for a violation must note on the citation if the violation contributed to the bodily injury of a vulnerable user of a public right-of-way.

Section 4 amends s. 316.0875(3), F.S., to add an additional exclusion from the provisions relating to no-passing zones. If the driver of a motor vehicle is required to cross pavement striping indicating a no-passing zone when passing a vulnerable user of a public right-of-way in order to provide at least three feet between the motor vehicle and the vulnerable user, the driver is *not* prohibited from crossing the centerline or driving on the left side of a roadway.

Section 5 creates s. 316.1921, F.S., making it unlawful to harass, taunt, or maliciously throw an object at or in the direction of a person riding a bicycle. A violation of this section is a first-degree misdemeanor punishable by a fine of at least \$250 or by imprisonment of not more than 30 days, or both.

Section 6 amends s. 316.1925, relating to careless driving, to require a law enforcement officer issuing a citation for a violation to note on the citation if the violation contributed to the bodily injury of a vulnerable user of a public right-of-way.

Section 7 amends s. 316.2065(5), F.S., relating to bicycle regulations, to revise the definition of “substandard-width lane” to mean a lane that is less than 14 feet wide and not adjacent to a bicycle lane that is at least five feet wide.

Section 8 creates s. 318.142, F.S., to require the designated official to impose a fine of not more than \$2,000, and the DHSMV to suspend the offender's driving privilege for six months, in addition to any other specified penalty, if the violation contributed to the bodily injury of a vulnerable user of a public right-of-way. Imposition of the additional penalties is delayed provided that, within one year after the date of sentencing, the offender completes a traffic safety course approved by the DHSMV and perform at least 100 but not more than 200 hours of community service, which must include activities related to driver improvement and public education on traffic safety. The designated official may grant an extension of the one-year period for good cause shown. If the offender successfully completes the requirements within the time allowed, the penalties are vacated. If not successfully completed within the time allowed, the penalties are imposed.

Section 9 amends s. 318.19, F.S., to require appearance at a mandatory hearing for any infraction of s. 316.083 (overtaking and passing), s. 316.0833 (right turn when passing vulnerable user), or s. 316.1925 (careless driving), F.S., which contributes to the bodily injury of a vulnerable user of a public right-of-way.

Sections 10, 11, and 12 amend ss. 322.095 (traffic law and substance abuse education program for driver license applicants), s. 322.12 (examination of applicants for a Class E driver license or commercial driver license), and s. 1003.48 (school-based Department of Education driver education course), F.S., respectively, to require the curriculum for the courses and the examinations to provide instruction on traffic laws and test the applicant's knowledge of such laws relating to the rights and safety of vulnerable users of public rights-of-way.

Section 13 provides a severability clause.

Section 14 provides the bill takes effect on October 1, 2015.

A number of editorial and grammatical revisions are also made in the bill.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

Offenders will be subject to the described penalties. A decrease in personal injury and death for vulnerable users may be experienced, as well as a reduction in costs associated with litigating claims for such injury or death.

C. Government Sector Impact:

According to the DHSMV, the bill's revisions to penalties associated with the rights and safety of vulnerable users of public right-of-way, for the harassing or taunting of bicycle riders, and for violations contributing to bodily injuries may result in positive fiscal impacts to local government. The number of additional citations and resulting positive fiscal impact, as well as any negative fiscal impact due to the need for reprogramming local e-citation systems, is indeterminate at this time.

Similarly, the department suggests, the bill's revisions to penalties associated with the rights and safety of vulnerable users of public right-of-way, for the harassing or taunting of bicycle riders, and for violations contributing to bodily injuries may result in positive fiscal impacts to state government. The number of additional citations and resulting revenues is indeterminate at this time. The DHSMV further notes:

The adoption of the bill will require state government to update and modify their programming systems. The fiscal impact to the Department is estimated at \$41,400 for 540 programming hours. Of the 540 programming hours, 210 hours at a \$40 hourly rate will be accomplished with full time equivalent personnel, and 330 hours at a \$100 hourly rate will be accomplished with contracted resources.²⁸

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

²⁸ See the DHSMV's 2015 Agency Legislative Bill Analysis for companion HB 231. On file in the Senate Transportation Committee.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 316.003, 316.083, 316.0875, 316.1925, 316.2065, 318.19, 322.095, 322.12, and 1003.48.

This bill creates the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 316.0833, 316.1921, and 318.142.

IX. Additional Information:**A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
