

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6418

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES,
FEBRUARY 4, 1994**

Brief Description: Modifying child immunization regulations.

SPONSORS: Senators West, Talmadge, Moyer, Erwin, Deccio, Winsley and Nelson

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6418 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Talmadge, Chairman; Wojahn, Vice Chairman; Erwin, Franklin, Fraser, Hargrove, McAuliffe, McDonald, Moyer, Quigley, L. Smith and Winsley.

Staff: Joanne Conrad (786-7472)

Hearing Dates: February 1, 1994; February 4, 1994

BACKGROUND:

Despite the availability of safe and effective immunizations, Washington State is experiencing an increase in the number of children becoming ill with vaccine-preventable infectious disease. Many parents can have their children immunized free of charge, and yet the rate of immunization, especially among preschool-aged children, is still low.

SUMMARY:

Compliance with the state Board of Health recommended infectious disease immunization schedule for children from birth to five years old is required, unless medically inadvisable, or refused for reasons of religious belief, philosophical or personal objection. A \$25 per month penalty is withheld from benefits received from Department of Social and Health Services, Department of Health, the Basic Health Plan or the Health Care Authority, until compliance is documented by benefit recipients.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:

"Well baby" health exams (under the EPSDT schedule) are required. The Department of Social and Health Services will pilot the compliance for AFDC recipients. The Health Care Authority will adopt standards for encouraging immunizations. Benefits withheld from recipients will be reimbursed upon compliance. Agencies requiring compliance will provide translation and cultural services to parents, if needed, to meet responsibilities for compliance.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested January 24, 1994

TESTIMONY FOR:

It is important to immunize children against infectious disease. Persons receiving state benefits have a compact of responsibility with the state. Legislation allows room for parental disagreement with immunization.

TESTIMONY AGAINST:

Wait for Infant Immunization Initiative Program to have effect, instead of sanctioning recipients for noncompliance. Legislation should clarify that the monetary sanction will be returned upon proof of compliance.

TESTIFIED: Senator Jim West, prime sponsor (pro); Dr. Maxine Hayes, Department of Health; Barbara Baker, Evergreen Legal Services; Laurie Lippold, Children's Alliance; Lonnie Johns-Brown, NOW (con)