

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5274

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Education, February 21, 1997

**Title:** An act relating to disclosure of students' social security numbers.

**Brief Description:** Limiting disclosure of students' social security numbers.

**Sponsors:** Senators Schow, Hochstatter, Zarelli, Stevens, Strannigan, Rasmussen, Deccio, Benton, Roach, Horn and Winsley.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Education: 2/6/97, 2/21/97 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5274 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hochstatter, Chair; Finkbeiner, Vice Chair; Johnson and Zarelli.

**Staff:** Susan Mielke (786-7422)

**Background:** Federal law (the Privacy Act of 1974) requires all governmental agencies requesting the disclosure of an individual's social security number to notify the individual of the following: (1) whether disclosure of the number is required or optional; (2) which authority permits the agency to request disclosure of the number; (3) how the number will be used; and (4) the consequences for failure to provide the number.

Currently, state laws do not provide limitations on a public school's request for disclosure of a student's social security number.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** School districts are prohibited from requesting a student's social security number, except for Medicaid reimbursement purposes. When a school district requests disclosure of a student's social security number for Medicaid reimbursement purposes, the school must use a form that contains a disclosure statement. The disclosure statement must include that the social security number is being requested for Medicaid reimbursement purposes and the consequences for not providing the number. It is unlawful for a public school to deny a student any right, benefit, or privilege if a student or parent refuses to disclose the social security number.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The original bill required a school district or public school to inform the parent, legal guardian, or when appropriate, the student of the following: (1) disclosure of the student's social security number is optional; (2) which authority permits the school district or school to request disclosure of the student's social security number; (3) how the student's social security number will be used by the school district or school; and (4) the consequences for failure to provide the student's social security

number. The substitute prohibits school districts from requesting a student's social security number except for Medicaid reimbursement purposes. When the request is for Medicaid reimbursement purposes, the school must use a form containing a disclosure statement.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** Many school districts are requesting the disclosure of students' social security numbers and not following the notice requirements of federal law. Since a person's social security number is a key to personal and confidential information, school districts should be prohibited from requesting it. They don't need it. If districts need to use numbers for testing or tracking purposes, they can generate numbers and assign them to students. Enforcement provisions should be added to penalize districts who continue to illegally request a student's social security number.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** PRO: Scott Allen; Marda Kirkwood, Citizens United for Responsible Education; Cyndy Lelli; Cheryle Meyers; Jerry Sheehan, ACLU; Janeane Dubuar, Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility.