

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1365

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, March 28, 2001

Title: An act relating to recalled infant and child products.

Brief Description: Requiring the department of health to publicize a list of recalled infant and child products.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Children & Family Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Doumit (co-prime sponsor), Pflug (co-prime sponsor), Tokuda, Boldt, Pennington, Rockefeller, Hatfield, Eickmeyer, Campbell, Edwards, Cairnes, Murray, Cody, Jackley, Mastin, Kirby, Buck, Kessler, Chopp, McIntire, Grant, Morris, Lisk, Ruderman, Van Luven, Kenney, Conway, Kagi and Schual-Berke).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 3/26/01, 3/28/01 [DPA-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Thibaudeau, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Costa, Deccio, Fraser, Parlette and Winsley.

Staff: Chelsea Buchanan (786-7446)

Background: In 1996, the Legislature passed the Infant Crib Safety Act (SB 6229) which required cribs sold, leased, or resold in Washington to comply with federal regulations and voluntary safety standards, and stated intent for the Department of Health to provide information to the public.

At this time there is no state public outreach program related to product recalls or to the existence of infant product safety hazards. The United States Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) maintains an Internet website that lists all recalled products and provides product safety information. Included on the website is a category for infant and child products. The Washington State Library maintains a website for consumers providing search capability of consumer protection sites. The site also highlights specific product recalls.

The Department of Health (DOH) has a designated contact for the Consumer Product Safety Commission. DOH and the local health jurisdictions receive press releases from the CPSC related to recalls and recommended product modifications.

Concern exists that consumers may not be aware of unsafe or recalled products and how to obtain information about them. Of particular concern are infant and child products such as cribs which persons may assume to be safe, and are often reused or resold.

Summary of Amended Bill: The Department of Health may develop and maintain a product safety education campaign. The campaign focuses on unsafe infant and child products (excluding toys) that have been recalled by the United States Consumer Products Safety Commission, or do not meet federal safety regulations and voluntary safety standards, or are illegal to place into the stream of commerce under the Infant Crib Safety Act, Chapter 70.111 RCW.

The target population for the campaign includes parents, foster parents, and other caregivers, child care workers, resale stores, and charities and government entities serving children and families.

DOH coordinates any campaign with other child-serving entities such as pediatricians and obstetricians and relevant manufacturers, and coordinates with other agencies to avoid duplication of effort. DOH may receive funding from private and government sources to carry out the program.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The amended bill clarifies that in addition to recalled products, the education campaign is to focus on unsafe products, and illegal products under the Infant Crib Safety Act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This program will save lives. The Infant Crib Safety Act needs additional follow-through. Even parents who are very aware of safety, such as health care professionals, may not realize that child products can be deadly. The Department of Health should utilize the existing Child Profile Program to reduce costs, and solicit outside funds as the bill allows. Funding appropriated to the Department of Health will be used to create an education campaign, and not simply distribute pamphlets.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Mark Doumit, co-prime sponsor (pro); Representative Cheryl Pflug, co-prime sponsor (pro); Senator Jeanne Kohl-Welles, sponsor of Senate companion bill (pro); Victor Colman, Department of Health (pro).