

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## ESSB 5598

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As Passed Senate, March 12, 2001

**Title:** An act relating to athletic trainers.

**Brief Description:** Registering athletic trainers.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Shin, Roach, Horn, Swecker, Kohl-Welles, Thibaudeau, Franklin, Rasmussen, B. Sheldon, Eide, Costa, McAuliffe, Prentice and Jacobsen).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 2/20/01, 2/27/01 [DPS].

Passed Senate: 3/12/01, 41-8.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5598 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

**Staff:** Chelsea Buchanan (786-7446)

**Background:** Athletic trainers are currently not regulated in Washington State. These individuals work under the supervision of a physical therapist or a physician in clinical settings, or they work autonomously or under the indirect supervision of a physician in interscholastic, amateur and professional sports settings. Their training is in the management of health problems associated with sports participation, including treating injuries, developing strength and flexibility, reducing pain and swelling, and ongoing rehabilitation.

Nine colleges and universities around the state offer athletic trainer programs. The National Athletic Trainers Association (NATA), a national independent certifying entity, reviews and regulates how athletic trainers prepare for and maintain competency in their profession.

In 1993, the Department of Health conducted a sunrise review of a proposal to license athletic trainers. It recommended no regulation.

**Summary of Bill:** Athletic trainers are regulated at the level of registration. No person may use the title "athletic trainer" without registering with the Secretary of Health. Athletic trainers are regulated under the state's Uniform Disciplinary Act.

The secretary establishes by rule fees and requirements for registration and renewal of registration.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** Athletic trainers have access to our youth and great responsibility; certifying them will increase public safety. Forty-three states have recognized this and have passed some type of regulating legislation. Parents and schools need to know that the athletic trainers they have hired have completed a recognized course of training and are qualified. Right now any person can represent themselves as an athletic trainer.

**Testimony Against:** The 1993 Department of Health sunrise review indicates there is no need to certify athletic trainers. This bill is unnecessary, and an updated sunrise review would be a more appropriate way of responding to safety concerns. **Concerns:** The definitions section and references to malpractice law seem to relate to licensing athletic trainers, rather than certification, which is confusing, since the intent of the bill is certification. The definitions of athletic injury and athletic training seem to overlap with the physical therapy scope of practice.

**Testified:** Senator Paul Shin, prime sponsor (pro); Senator Pam Roach, co-sponsor (pro); Jim Whitesel, Washington State Athletic Trainers Association (pro); Ingrid Fuhrman, mother and former PTA president (pro); Bill Slosson, River Ridge High School (pro); Brad Agerup, Washington State Athletic Trainers Association (pro); Mark A. Todd, Washington State Athletic Trainers Association (pro); Susan Chalcraft, Physical Therapy Association of Washington (concerns); Melissa Johnson, Physical Therapy Association of Washington (concerns); Carl Nelson, Washington State Medical Association (con); Jeff Larsen, WOMA (con).