
HOUSE BILL 2615

State of Washington

57th Legislature

2002 Regular Session

By Representatives Cody, Dickerson, McIntire, Rockefeller, Santos, Lysen, Chase, Schual-Berke, Conway, Kenney, Darneille, Jackley and Simpson

Read first time 01/22/2002. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to an elementary school disabilities awareness
2 program; adding a new chapter to Title 28A RCW; and providing an
3 effective date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that:

6 (a) Thirty-four percent of children with disabilities may be
7 perceived as less valuable than other children;

8 (b) Children with disabilities are maltreated 1.7 times the rate of
9 other children;

10 (c) One in ten Americans has a severe disability;

11 (d) Nine million people of all ages have disabilities so severe
12 that they require personal assistance to carry out day-to-day
13 activities; and

14 (e) In the general population, child victims of abuse are at high
15 risk for multiple problems, including depression, anxiety, and low
16 self-esteem. Consequences of abuse may be more pronounced in children
17 with disabilities because of their already vulnerable physical and
18 psychological state. Research has shown that the longer abuse has gone
19 on the more damage may result. Since the child with disabilities who

1 is abused is less likely to be identified, he or she is likely to
2 suffer more damage because of long-term abuse. Abuse may exacerbate
3 existing disabilities and cause additional permanent disabilities.

4 (2) The purposes of this act are to:

5 (a) Inform and educate elementary students about disabilities and
6 diseases that cause deformities; and

7 (b) Provide students with the proper etiquette and skills to
8 interact with those who are disabled.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply
10 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

11 (1) "Albinism" means the absence of normal pigmentation in a person
12 wherein, no melanin is produced resulting in milk-white and pink skin,
13 white hair, and weak eyes.

14 (2) "Amputations" means the removal of parts of the body, usually
15 limbs.

16 (3) "Autism" means a developmental disability significantly
17 affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction
18 which adversely affect performance. Characteristics associated with
19 autism involve engagement in repetitive activities, resistance to
20 environmental change or change in routine, and unusual responses to
21 sensory experience.

22 (4) "Blindness" means an impairment in vision that does not allow
23 for sight.

24 (5) "Burns" means damage to the body due to heat, resulting in
25 deformation of the areas affected.

26 (6) "Cerebral palsy" means impaired muscular power and coordination
27 from brain damage usually occurring at or before birth.

28 (7) "Common courtesies" means often used polite behavior.

29 (8) "Conversational skills" means abilities used when speaking.

30 (9) "Deafness" means partially or completely incapable of hearing.

31 (10) "Disabilities" means physical or mental impairments that
32 substantially limit one or more major life activities.

33 (11) "Etiquette" means a governing code of behavior or courtesy.

34 (12) "Hearing impairments" means an impairment in hearing, whether
35 permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects performance.

36 (13) "Mental retardation" means significantly under average general
37 intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in

1 adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period that
2 adversely affects performance.

3 (14) "Multiple sclerosis" means a degenerative disease of the
4 central nervous system, in which hardening of the tissues occurs
5 throughout the brain or spinal cord, or both and that results in a lack
6 of muscular control.

7 (15) "Orthopedic impairment" means an impairment that affects
8 skeletal system and/or associated motor organs and includes impairments
9 caused by congenital anomaly such as clubfoot, lobster claw syndrome,
10 and absence of some extremity, impairments caused by disease such as
11 bone tuberculosis, and impairments from other causes such as fractures
12 or burns that cause contractures.

13 (16) "Skin conditions" means impairments that effect the skin in a
14 way that affects performance.

15 (17) "Speech or language impairment" means a communication
16 disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language
17 impairment, or a voice impairment, that adversely affects performance.

18 (18) "Visual impairments" means an impairment in vision that, even
19 with correction, adversely affects performance and includes both
20 partial sight and blindness.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of
22 this section, all elementary schools shall adopt a disabilities
23 awareness program.

24 (a) The program must include information covering mental
25 retardation, hearing impairments including deafness, speech or language
26 impairment, visual impairments including blindness, autism, and
27 orthopedic impairments including cerebral palsy, amputations, and
28 multiple sclerosis, skin conditions including albinism, and burns.

29 (b) The program must include an etiquette section that includes
30 information about how to address those who are disabled, common
31 courtesies, and conversational skills.

32 (c) Students must attend the program at least once by the time they
33 reach the third grade.

34 (2) Students who have a disability are not required to take the
35 program.

36 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** This chapter may be known and cited as the
37 disabilities awareness act.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** Sections 1 through 4 of this act constitute
2 a new chapter in Title 28A RCW.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** This act takes effect August 1, 2003.

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