

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5188

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, February 28, 2005

Title: An act relating to the children's environmental health and protection advisory council.

Brief Description: Creating the children's environmental health and protection advisory council.

Sponsors: Senators Franklin, Thibaudeau, Kohl-Welles, Keiser, Kline, Rasmussen, Fairley, Jacobsen and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 1/24/05, 2/28/05 [DPS-WM, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5188 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Thibaudeau, Vice Chair; Benson, Franklin, Kastama, Kline and Poulsen.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Brandland, Johnson and Parlette.

Staff: Sharon Swanson (786-7447)

Background: Studies have shown that children are more susceptible to exposure to environmental pollutants than adults. They are particularly vulnerable to such hazards as lead, pesticides, air pollutants, contaminated water, toxic waste, secondhand tobacco smoke, and industrial and home chemicals. Children are more susceptible because they absorb toxins at a much higher rate relative to body weight than do adults. They also have not formed natural biological barriers that block toxins from entering the blood stream, and they tend to play in areas where they are exposed to toxins.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Children's Environmental Health and Protections Advisory Council is created. Membership includes 15 people representing the Legislature, several state agencies, parents of children who have been identified as having been exposed to an environmental hazard, and an expert in environmental toxicology.

The council must meet at least four times per year to review existing laws, rules and regulations which may pose environmental hazards to the health of children. The state Board of Health provides staff support to the Council. The Council must report to the Governor and the Legislature by December of 2005 and 2006 with recommendations on changes in regulation that would decrease environmental hazards to children.

The legislation expires June 30, 2007.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Allows Senators and Representatives to have their designees attend task force meetings. Additional technical changes are made to the bill.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: Yes.

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

Testimony For: Children are more susceptible to toxins but their reactions are not easily understood because the reactions differ for adults. This issue needs to be studied closely, this legislation will accomplish that. Children should not be allowed to suffer, issue needs to be addressed.

Testimony Against: Pesticides should not be included under this bill. The issue of pesticide use and the effect on children is already being addressed through other legislation. Duplication of efforts simply adds additional levels of bureaucracy to small business owners.

Who Testified: PRO: John Roberts, League of Women's Voters; Suzy Nickel, AFRA; Ruth Shearer, Citizen.

CON: Heather Hansen, WA Friends of Farms & Forests; Dan Coyne, Far West Agribusiness.