

HB 2292 - DIGEST

(SUBSTITUTED FOR - SEE 2ND SUB)

Finds that access to safe, affordable health care is one of the most important issues facing the citizens of Washington state.

Finds that the rising cost of medical malpractice insurance has caused some physicians, particularly those in high-risk specialties such as obstetrics and emergency room practice, to be unavailable when and where the citizens need them the most. The answers to these problems are varied and complex, requiring comprehensive solutions that encourage patient safety practices, increase oversight of medical malpractice insurance, and making the civil justice system more understandable, fair, and efficient for all the participants.

Finds that neither of the initiatives, Initiative 330 or Initiative 336, contain comprehensive, real solutions to the problems they are attempting to solve, and for this reason, offers the following single alternative to both of these initiatives to the citizens of this state.

Declares an intent to prioritize patient safety and the prevention of medical errors above all other considerations as legal changes are made to address the problem of high malpractice insurance premiums. Thousands of patients are injured each year as a result of medical errors, many of which can be avoided by supporting health care providers, facilities, and carriers in their efforts to reduce the incidence of those mistakes.

Declares an intent to provide incentives to settle cases before resorting to court, and to provide the option of a more fair, efficient, and streamlined alternative to trials for those for whom settlement negotiations do not work.

Declares an intent to provide the insurance commissioner with the tools and information necessary to regulate medical malpractice insurance rates and policies so that they are fair to both the insurers and the insured.

Declares that this act constitutes an alternative to Initiative 330. The secretary of state shall place this act on the ballot in conjunction with Initiative 330 at the next regular general election.

Declares that this act constitutes an alternative to Initiative 336. The secretary of state shall place this act on the ballot in conjunction with Initiative 336 at the next regular general election.