

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1322

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to scoliosis screening in schools.

Brief Description: Repealing scoliosis screening in schools.

Sponsors: Representatives Green, Morrell, Hinkle, Kirby, Kelley, Moeller, Blake, Seaquist, Rolfes, Cody and Simpson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 1/27/09 [DP].

Floor Activity

Passed House: 2/23/09, 96-0.

Passed Senate: 3/31/09, 45-3.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Repeals the requirement that students in public schools be screened for scoliosis.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Driscoll, Vice Chair; Ericksen, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Green, Hinkle, Kelley, Moeller, Morrell and Pedersen.

Staff: Jim Morishima (786-7191)

Background:

Scoliosis is a condition in which the spine curves away from the center of the body in an "S" or a "C" shape. Many cases of scoliosis are mild and require no treatment. For more severe cases, treatment with a brace or surgery may be warranted.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Public school students must be screened for scoliosis at least three times; once in the fifth grade, once in the seventh grade, and once in the ninth grade. The procedures used for the screenings must be consistent with the standards of the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons. The parent or guardian of any student suspected of having scoliosis must be notified of the results of the screening and be provided with information about treatment services available from health care providers.

In the 2004-2005 school year, 148,813 public school students were screened for scoliosis in Washington under this program. Of this number, 5,043 students were referred to health care providers, 20 were treated with a brace, and 11 were treated with surgery.

Summary of Bill:

The scoliosis screening program for public school students is repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) School nurses are stretched thin by a variety of duties, including the administration of medications, education, and hearing and vision screenings. Scoliosis screenings take up a lot of time for school nurses, despite the fact that it has low prevalence, low morbidity, and no connection to learning; the screenings are the school nursing duties that provide the least amount of positive health outcomes. Best practices indicate that scoliosis screenings in schools are not warranted. The number of states requiring the screenings is therefore decreasing. The benefits of these screenings do not outweigh the costs.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Green, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.