

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1322

As of March 18, 2009

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

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 3/18/09.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

Background: Scoliosis is a disorder in which there is a sideways curve of the spine, or backbone. Treatment may include observation, bracing, or surgery. Surgery may involve fusing together two or more bones in the spine.

Under current Washington law, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must require scoliosis screening for public school students at least three times between fourth and eleventh grades. According to rules established by the State Board of Health, students must be screened annually in fifth, seventh, and ninth grades. The procedures used must be consistent with the standards of the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons. State law requires that parents or guardians of any student who has, or is suspected to have, scoliosis are notified of the screening results and provided information about scoliosis and the services available from health care providers.

According to OSPI, 139,474 students were screened for scoliosis in Washington in the 2006-07 school year. As a result of the screening program, 3,800 students were referred to a health care provider and 59 students were braced or had surgery.

Summary of Bill: The statutes that establish the scoliosis screening program for public school students are repealed.

Appropriation: None.

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.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The intent section is important because it explains that we are not just abandoning scoliosis, rather clinical evidence does not support broad screening in a generalized way. We should adapt as we gain new information. This is also a way to repeal another unfunded mandate on our schools. With the exception of the intent section, the Senate and House bills are the same and the substance of both is good.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Green, prime sponsor; Lonnie Johns-Brown, School Nurse Organizations of Washington.