

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1750

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government & Tribal Relations

Title: An act relating to establishing Yori's law to promote education around water safety and drowning prevention.

Brief Description: Promoting water safety education.

Sponsors: Representatives Berg, Reed, Taylor, Cortes, Street, Ramel, Leavitt, Kloba, Tharinger, Fosse, Gregerson, Stonier, Entenman, Reeves, Slatter, Donaghy, Santos, Hackney, Morgan, Timmons, Ormsby, Orwall, Callan, Duerr, Berry, Davis, Chapman, Abbarno, Thai, Senn, Alvarado, Walen, Rule, Doglio, Ryu and Pollet.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Relations: 2/14/23, 2/15/23 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Designates May 15 as Water Safety Day.
- Encourages individuals who work with children to provide training, educational materials, and other resources to the children and their families around water safety on Water Safety Day.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL RELATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Ramos, Chair; Stearns, Vice Chair; Abbarno, Ranking Minority Member; Christian, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Gregerson, Low and Mena.

Staff: Devon Mann (786-7290) and Desiree Omli (786-7105).

Background:

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

Water Safety.

May is designated as National Water Safety Month and is a time that organizations help promote water safety awareness and drowning prevention. In Washington, the State Drowning Prevention Network was developed and is led by various state and local agencies to provide a forum for organizations to work together to prevent drowning by hosting water safety events and providing training throughout Washington.

In the United States, someone dies from drowning every 10 minutes. Drowning is the leading cause of death for children aged 1 to 4. In Washington, drowning is one of the leading causes of unintentional injury or death for children and teens ages 1 through 17. One out of every five drowning victims is a child, and, for every child who drowns, another five children are treated with injuries related to being submerged in water. Nationally, almost 800 children drown every year. Two-thirds of drowning related deaths of children occur during the time between May and August.

While the specific circumstances leading to a drowning death are different in every case, there are common themes seen across age groups and types of water. Children younger than 1 year old are most likely to drown at home; children ages 1 to 4 years old are most likely to drown in a pool; and children ages 5 to 17 years old are most likely to drown in natural water. Silence and speed are the two main characteristics of all childhood drowning, as drowning can happen sometimes in less than two minutes after a person's head is submerged in water.

Legislatively Recognized Days.

There are 17 officially recognized days in Washington that are not state legal holidays: Korean American Day, Columbus Day, Prisoner of War Recognition Day, Washington Army and Air National Guard Day, Purple Heart Recipient Recognition Day, Washington State Children's Day, Mother Joseph Day, Marcus Whitman Day, Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day, Civil Liberties Day of Remembrance, Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day, Human Trafficking Awareness Day, Cesar Chavez Day, Dolores Huerta Day, Public Lands Day, and Blood Donor Day.

Summary of Bill:

May 15 is recognized as Water Safety Day, on which individuals who work directly with children in their profession are encouraged to provide training, educational materials, and other resources to the children and their families around water safety, water rescue, and drowning prevention. Water Safety Day is not designated as a paid state legal holiday.

In memory of those lost to drowning, the act may be known and cited as "Yori's law."

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary 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) This bill emphasizes the importance of educating parents and bringing awareness about the basics of water safety. Water sports and recreation are hugely popular, especially in Washington. Drowning is the number one cause of accidental death for children ages 1 to 4. For every child that dies from drowning there are five to 10 nonfatal cases that require hospital care and at least 88 percent of child drownings occur with at least one adult present. Drowning happens quickly and quietly. Organizations like the YMCA lower the risk of children drowning by giving free swim lessons and raising awareness about water safety. The Legislature has a responsibility to protect the children in the state and to lower child drowning statistics, especially when child drownings are largely preventable.

There are also racial, gender, and economic disparities in childhood drowning that are foundational to the need for this bill. Victims of childhood drowning are disproportionately from communities of color, and many have decreased access to swim lessons compared to Caucasian children. African American children aged 5 to 19 are 5-1/2 times more likely to drown in swimming pools compared to their Caucasian counterparts, and male children are twice as likely to drown as female children. Socioeconomic status plays a role as well; children whose parents are unable to swim often lack the ability to swim themselves, and 79 percent of those children are in households with incomes of under \$50,000.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative April Berg, prime sponsor; Chezik Tsunoda, No More Under; Kyle Kamman, YMCA of Greater Seattle; Ise Tsunoda; Masao Tsunoda; and Kenzo Tsunoda.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.