

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5116

As of July 31, 2006

Title: An act relating to skate parks.

Brief Description: Requiring helmets within public skate parks.

Sponsors: Senators Shin, Rasmussen, Kohl-Welles, Weinstein, Kline, Keiser, Berkey, Fairley, Regala, McAuliffe and Spanel.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 2/10/05, 2/24/05 [w/oRec-JUD].

Judiciary: 3/1/05.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Staff: Lilah Amos (786-7425)

Background: Local governing bodies, including cities, park districts, school districts, and counties, are authorized to acquire land for recreational facilities and to construct and maintain such facilities. By 2003, approximately fifty four local governments had a skate park or were planning to open a skate park.

According to statistics from the National Safe Kids Campaign, more than 176,000 children nationwide between the ages of five and fourteen are treated in emergency rooms due to skateboard, scooter, or skating accidents each year. Head injuries are the leading cause of death and permanent disability from wheeled sports. Helmets have been shown to reduce the risk of bicycle-related head injury by as much as 85 percent and the risk of brain injury by as much as 88 percent.

The federal government, through the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, issued a mandatory federal bicycle helmet safety standard in 1999. All bicycle helmets manufactured or imported for sale in the United States must meet these federal safety standards.

Summary of Bill: Any person using or riding a skateboard, bicycle, scooter, or roller skates within a publicly owned or operated skate park is required to wear an approved protective helmet. An "approved protective helmet" is a head covering that meets or exceeds safety standards adopted by any national standards testing institute.

The managers of publicly owned skate parks are authorized, but not required, to remove individuals from the skate park who are not wearing helmets or to deny them access to the skate parks. Owners and operators of the park do not have a duty to enforce the requirement that a helmet be worn.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: This is a children's safety issue. The bill is intended to encourage young people to wear safety helmets. This will reduce the number of injured children and will save lives.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Senator Shin, prime sponsor.

CON: No one.