
**Juvenile Justice & Family Law
Committee**

HB 2178

Brief Description: Regarding violent video and computer games.

Sponsors: Representatives Dickerson, McCune and McDermott.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Permits a person to bring a personal injury or wrongful death claim against a manufacturer or retailer of violent video or computer games if the manufacturer or retailer has distributed, sold, or rented a violent video or computer game to a person under the age of 17 and the game was a factor in the injury or death of another person.

Hearing Date: 2/28/05

Staff: Sonja Hallum (786-7092).

Background:

Video games may include store-bought games, computer games downloaded from the internet, and hand-held game players. Since their inception, video games have become increasingly realistic and interactive. The subject matter of the video games varies greatly, ranging from animated and educational games for children to more sophisticated action games. Some video games have been criticized for their use of violence.

In Washington, a person may bring a "personal injury" lawsuit when the person suffers harm from an accident or injury, and someone else might be legally responsible for that harm. If a person dies as a result of another's conduct, the personal representative of the deceased person may bring a wrongful death suit to recover damages for the loss to the spouse or next of kin.

Summary of Bill:

A person may file a personal injury or wrongful death lawsuit against a manufacturer or retailer of a violent video or computer game who has distributed, sold, or rented a violent video game to a person under the age of 17 if the game was a factor in creating conditions that assisted or encouraged the person to cause injury to death to another person.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 22, 2005.

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