

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2842

As Reported by House Committee On:
Education

Title: An act relating to organ and tissue donor education and awareness.

Brief Description: Requiring that organ donation awareness be taught in public schools.

Sponsors: Representatives B. Sullivan, Anderson, Quall, Tom, Chase and Simpson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 1/25/06, 2/2/06 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires organ donation awareness to be taught in public schools in driver training courses and as part of the required curriculum in state-regulated driver training schools.
- The cost of developing, distributing, and implementing the curriculum is paid by donations to the nonprofit foundation established by the two Washington organ procurement organizations.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; P. Sullivan, Vice Chair; Talcott, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Haigh, Hunter, McDermott, Priest, Santos, Shabro, Tom, and Wallace.

Staff: Sarah Ream (786-7303).

Background:

Washington's Uniform Anatomical Gift Act allows a person over 18 years old, or over 16 years old if also agreed upon in writing by his or her parent or guardian, to agree to donate all or part of his or her body to another person. An organ donor may indicate his or her intent to donate by signing a "document of gift." This document may be a driver's license, a donor card, a will, or other written statement of the donor's intentions.

In 2003, the Legislature created an organ and tissue donor registry to facilitate organ and tissue donation. The Legislature also created the Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness

Account (Account). Funds for the Account come from donations by applicants for vehicle registration and other sources and are used for organ and tissue donation awareness programs. Periodically, the funds in the Account are transferred to the foundation for donation awareness which was established by the two Washington organ procurement organizations.

Between 1988 and 2005, over 6,900 organ transplants were performed in Washington, with 235 organ donations in 2005. Approximately 1,200 people in Washington need an organ donation. National statistics indicate that approximately half of the people listed for an organ transplant will not receive one due to the shortage of donated organs. On average, 17 people across the nation die each day waiting for life-saving organ transplants.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Requires that driver training courses taught by public schools or state licensed private driving schools include instruction regarding organ donation awareness, including instruction regarding the organ and tissue donor registry.

The costs of developing, distributing, and implementing the instruction regarding organ donation is paid by the foundation established by the Washington organ procurement organizations.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

Organ donation must be taught as part of the curriculum driver training courses provided by public schools and by state-regulated private driver training schools. The original bill required public school students to receive instruction regarding organ donation awareness at least once beginning with the ninth grade.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: When students learn about organ donation, they tend to sign up to be organ donors. Having instruction regarding organ donation is the next logical step after the creation of the organ donor registry. Education makes it easier for people to make choices about organ donations and makes them aware of the good that they can do for others. Sixteen states have laws that require organ donation instruction. There should be a nexus between the organ donation awareness program and drivers education.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Don Rash, Association of Washington School Principals; and Vicki Austin, Arlene Mitterholzer, and Jill Steinhaus, Life Center Northwest.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.