

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5189

As of February 8, 2005

Title: An act relating to lead-based paint activities.

Brief Description: Reducing childhood lead exposure.

Sponsors: Senators Franklin, Thibaudeau, Keiser, Regala, Doumit, Rockefeller, Brown, Kline, Fairley, Rasmussen, McAuliffe, Fraser, Prentice, Jacobsen, Poulsen, Kohl-Welles and Weinstein. .

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 1/24/05.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Staff: Sharon Swanson (786-7447)

Background: There is concern that lead is highly toxic and lead exposure is dangerous, especially to children. Young children are at higher risk for lead poisoning, as their bodies are smaller and still developing. The effects of lead on a child's cognitive, behavioral, and developmental abilities may necessitate large expenditures of public funds for health care and special education. Low income children are at greater risk for lead poisoning.

Low to moderate lead poisoning in children can cause nervous system and kidney damage, decreased muscle and bone growth, hearing damage, speech, language, and behavior problems, learning disabilities and reduced IQ.

There is concern that families in older housing are not aware of the dangers of lead poisoning, that they do not know how to detect and abate existing lead hazards, and how to control for lead dust while performing their own remodeling.

The potential for irreversible damage to children and subsequent expenditures might be avoided if exposure to lead is reduced.

Summary of Bill: The Department of Health is directed to implement a public health education program aimed at reducing childhood exposure to lead in residential settings. The program should especially focus on older housing stock and the residential hazards of lead based paint.

The department is directed to seek federal funding for the program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: Lead is damaging to children. Lead has been discovered in the Seattle School District water. This is a preventable problem, we must study the issue to prevent children from damage.

Testimony Against: Lead was a problem forty years ago. Lead was a problem when it was in the fuel, but that has changed. The percentage of lead in a child's system was 33 percent in 1960's. Now the average amount found in a child is 1 percent. This legislation is nothing more than misdirected enthusiasm for a problem that has been dealt with.

Who Testified: PRO: Jennifer Tabaldi, Washington DOD; John Woodring, Pacific Northwest Paint Council; Ruth Shearer, Citizen.

CON: Bill Robertson, MD.