

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6378

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Health & Long-Term Care, February 2, 2006

**Title:** An act relating to athletic trainers.

**Brief Description:** Licensing persons offering athletic training services.

**Sponsors:** Senators Shin, Schoesler, Berkey, Brandland, Keiser, Fairley, McAuliffe and Delvin.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 1/19/06, 2/2/06 [DPS, w/oRec].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6378 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Thibaudeau, Vice Chair; Brandland, Franklin, Johnson, Kastama, Kline and Poulsen.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Parlette.

**Staff:** Edith Rice (786-7444)

**Background:** There are currently no state statutes regulating athletic trainers. Over 40 states provide for some form of regulation of this profession, but requirements vary from state to state. RCW 18.120.010, the Sunrise Act, provides criteria for the regulation of health care professions in Washington State. These criteria include: potential for harm, public benefit from assurance of professional ability, and public protection. The Department of Health has conducted a sunrise review of athletic trainers on two prior occasions. One in 1993 and, most recently, in January 2002. The Department recommended in both reviews that the profession not be regulated. Advocates for regulation have pointed out that currently anyone may represent him or herself as an athletic trainer, without regard to training, experience, or expertise. Athletic trainers from other states who have had credentialing revoked or suspended can still practice in Washington State. Advocates assert that setting education, practice, and training standards for athletic trainers will protect the public from harm.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** Athletic trainers provide services relating to the prevention, immediate care, evaluation, treatment, rehabilitation, reconditioning, and management of athletic injuries. Athletic trainers are added to the list of professions licensed under the authority of the Secretary of the Department of Health. The Secretary has authority to develop rules; establish licensing, examination, and renewal fees; issue licenses; discipline licensed members of the profession; hire staff to implement this chapter; and determine which applicants need not be examined in order to obtain a license.

A board of athletic trainers is created to review reports of unprofessional conduct and complaints and to recommend rules relating to administration of the profession. Requirements to apply for licensure are set out. These requirements are waived for those who make application and appropriate fee payment before July 1, 2007, and if they meet certain requirements. Fees collected must be available for administration of this chapter.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** Athletic training services do not include spinal manipulation. Athletic trainers will not be a category of health care provider covered under the state's every category of provider law. Personal trainers are not required to be licensed as athletic trainers.

**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:** Athletic trainers provide a valuable service by managing and preventing injuries. The public should be protected by requiring that those representing themselves as athletic trainers be licensed so the scope of practice and required expertise is defined. Currently, anyone can call themselves an athletic trainer. There are national organizations which currently can set standards for this profession.

**Testimony Against:** Some of the definitions are problematic, although the concept is good. Language in the bill is too broad. Some concerns are technical.

**Who Testified:** PRO: Senator Paull Shin, prime sponsor; Michael Coco, Washington State Athletic Trainers Assoc., Jerry Parrish, Russell Richardson, Tucker Hoff, William Slosson, Athletic Trainers.

CON: Melissa Johnson, Rich Bettsworth, Steve Tollefson, Physical Therapy Association; Laurie Jenkins, Department of Health; Nancee Wildermuth, Regence Blue Shield.